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PENGUIN PARADE

new stories, poems, etc., by
contemporary writers

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EDITED BY
DENYS KILHAM ROBERTS



ALLEN LANE
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Contributions

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The large quantity of material received makes it impossible for the Editor to provide criticisms of rejected contributions or to give reasons for their rejection.

All work is selected entirely on its merits, regardless of the author's name. Young writers are especially encouraged.

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Weep in Years to Come

BY IRWIN SHAW

THEY came out of the movie house and started slowly toward Fifth Avenue

Hitler a newsboy called Hitler!

That Fletcher Dora said the one that played her father Remember him?

Uhuh Paul said holding her hand walking slowly up the dark street

He's got stones in his kidney

That's the way he acts Paul said Now I know how to describe the way that man acts—he acts like a man who has stones in his kidney

Dora laughed I X rayed him last winter He's one of Dr Thayer's best patients He's always got something wrong with him He's going to try to pass the stones out of his kidney this summer

Good luck Fletcher old man Paul said

I used to massage his shoulder He had neuritis He makes fifteen hundred dollars a week

No wonder he has neuritis

He asked me to come to his house for dinner Dora pulled her hand out of Paul's and slipped it up to his elbow and held on hard He likes me

I bet he does

What about you?

What about me what? Paul asked

Do you like me?

They stopped at Rockefeller Plaza and leaned over the marble wall and looked down at the fountain and the statue and the people sitting out at the tables drink

ing, and the waiters standing around listening to the sound of the fountain.

"I can't stand you," Paul said. He kissed her hair.

"That's what I thought," Dora said. They both laughed.

They looked down at the plaza, at the thin trees with the light green leaves, rustling in the wind that came down between the buildings. There were pansies, yellow and tight, along the borders of the small pools with the bronze sea-statues, and hydrangeas, and little full trees, all shaking in the wind and the diffuse clear light of the floodlamps above. Couples strolled slowly down from Fifth Avenue, talking amiably in low, calm, week-end voices, appreciating the Rockefeller frivolity and extravagance which had carved a place for hydrangeas and water and saplings and Spring and sea-gods riding bronze dolphins out of these austere buildings, out of the bleak side of Business.

They walked up the promenade, looking in the windows. They stopped at a window filled with men's sport clothes, gabardine slacks and bright-coloured shirts with short sleeves and brilliant handkerchiefs to tie around the throat.

"I have visions," Paul said, "of sitting in my garden, with two Great Danes, dressed like that—like a Hollywood actor in the country."

"Have you got a garden?" Dora asked.

"No."

"Those 're nice pants," Dora said.

They went on to the next window. "On the other hand," Paul said, "there are days when I want to look like that. A derby hat and a stiff blue shirt with a pleated bosom and a little starched white collar and a five-dollar neat little necktie and a Burberry overcoat. Leave the office at five o'clock every day to go to a cocktail party."

"You go to a cocktail party almost every afternoon anyway," Dora said. "Without a derby hat."

A different kind of cocktail party Paul guided
her across Fifth Avenue The kind attended by men
with starched blue pleated bosoms Some day

Oh Lord! Dora said as they ran to escape a
bus look at those dresses

They stood in front of Saks

Fifth Avenue Paul said 'Street of dreams

It's nice to know things like that exist Dora mur-
mured looking into the stage lit window at the yellow
dress and the sign that said Tropical Nights in Man-
hattan and the little carved stone fish that for some
reason was in the same window— even if you can't
have them

Uptown? Paul asked Or to my house?

I feel like walking Dora looked up at Paul and
grinned For the moment She squeezed his arm

Only for the moment Uptown

They started uptown

I love those models Paul said Each and every
one of them They're superior yet warm inviting
yet polite their breasts are always tipped at the correct
angle for the season

Sure Dora said papier mâché It's easy with
papier mâché Look Aluminium suit-cases Travel
by air

They look like my mother's kitchen pots

Wouldn't you like to own a few of them?

Yes Paul peered at them Fly away Buy
luggage and depart Leave for the ends of the earth

They got a little case just for books A whole
separate little travelling bookcase

That's just what I need Paul said 'for my trips
on the Fifth Avenue bus every morning

They passed St Patrick's dark and huge with the
moon sailing over it

Hitler! a newsboy called from across the street

Do you think God walks up Fifth Avenue? Paul
asked

"Sure," said Dora. "Why not?"

"We are princes of the earth," Paul said "All over the world men slave to bring riches to these few blocks for us to look at and say, 'Yes, very nice,' or, 'Take it away, it stinks' I feel very important when I walk up Fifth Avenue"

They stopped at the window of the Hamburg-America Line Little dolls in native costumes danced endlessly around a pole while other dolls in native costume looked on All the dolls had wide smiles on their faces "Harvest Festival in Buckeburg, Germany," a small sign said

A private policeman turned the corner and stood and watched them They moved to the next window

"A suggestion to passengers to promote care-free travel," Paul read off a booklet "Also, 'Hapag-Lloyd announces a twenty per cent reduction for all educators on sabbatical leave' They are Masters in the Art of Travel, they say."

"I used to want to go to see Germany," Dora said "I know a lot of Germans, and they're nice."

"I'll be there soon," Paul said as they passed the private policeman

"You're going to visit it?"

"Uhuh At the expense of the Government In a well-tailored khaki uniform I'm going to see glamorous Europe, seat of culture, at last From a bombing plane To our left we have the Stork Club, seat of culture for East Fifty-Third Street Look at the pretty girls A lot of them have breasts at the correct angle, too See how Nature mimics art New York is a wonderful city"

Dora didn't say anything She hung on to him tightly as they went down the street toward Madison Avenue

They stopped at a shop that had phonographs and radios in the window

"That's what I want," Paul pointed at a machine

A Caphart It plays two symphonies at a time
You just lie on your back and out comes Brahms and
Beethoven and Prokofieff That's the way life should
be Lie on your back and be surrounded by great
music automatically

Hitler!! a newsboy called down Madison Avenue
Dora looked at the phonograph all mahogany and
doors and machinery ' Do you really think there's
going to be a war?

Sure. They're warming up the pitchers now
They're waiting to see if the other side has right handed
or left handed batters before they nominate their starting
pitchers

They started downtown

But it's in Europe Dora said Do you think
we'll get into it?

Sure Read the papers. Look at those nice
tables Informal luncheons on your terrace Metal
and glass for outdoor feeding. That would be nice
eating out on a terrace off those wonderful coloured
plates rich food with green salads With a view of
mountains and a lake and inside the phonograph

That sounds good ' Dora said quietly

I could get an extra speaker Paul said and wire
it out to the terrace so we could listen as we ate
Musicians hate it when I tell them I like symphonies
as I eat They think you should pay complete attention
to the music Maybe they're right but I like it He
laughed and drew her in to a bookstore window I
like Mozart with dinner Raymond Scott after dinner

I always get sad Dora said, when I look in a
bookshop window and see all the books I'm never going
to have time to read

Paul kissed her the first kiss What did you think
the first time you saw me? he asked

What did *you* think?

I thought I must get that girl

Dora laughed close to him

"What did you think?" Paul asked

"I thought . . ." She giggled "I thought, 'I must get that man'"

"Isn't New York marvellous?" Paul said, walking downtown "Where did you say you come from?"

"Seattle," Dora said—"Seattle, Washington"

"Here we are on Madison Avenue, holding hands, shopping for the future . . . Maybe we ought to get married"

"Later," Dora said "Let's think about that some other time"

"Hitler! Hitler!" the newsboy on the corner cried as they came up to him

"Go away," Paul said to him "Shut up, like a good guy Not to-night Sell your papers some other night"

"Say, Bud," the newsboy asked, "what the hell's wrong with you?"

"Sorry," said Paul, as they walked past him

"Hitler!" the boy called "Chamberlain! Roosevelt! Hitler!"

"Even if there was a war," Dora said after a while, "why would you have to get mixed up in it? Why would the United States have to get mixed up in it?"

"They got into the last one, didn't they?" Paul said "They'll get into this one"

"They were gypped the last time," Dora said "The guys who were killed were gypped."

"That's right," said Paul "They were killed for six per cent interest on bonds, for oil-wells, for spheres of influence I wish I had a sphere of influence"

"Still," said Dora, "you'd enlist this time?"

"Yop The first day I'd walk right up to the recruiting office and say, 'Paul Triplett, twenty-six years old, hard as nails, good eyes, good teeth, good feet Give me a gun Put me in a plane, so I can do a lot of damage'"

They walked a whole block in silence

Don't you think you'd be gypped this time too?
Dora said Don't you think they'd have you fighting
for bonds and oil wells all over again?

Uhuh

And even so you'd sign up?

The first day

Dora pulled her hand away from him Do you
like the idea of killing people?

I hate the idea Paul said slowly talking for him
self telling himself something I don't want to hurt
anybody I think the idea of war is ridiculous I want
to live in a world in which everybody sits on a terrace
and eats off a metal and glass table off coloured plates
and the phonograph inside turns Mozart over auto-
matically and the music is piped out to an extra loud
speaker on the terrace Only Hitler isn't interested in
that kind of world He's interested in another kind of
world I couldn't stand to live in his kind of world
German or home made

You wouldn't kill Hitler Dora said trying before
anything happened to get Paul to say he'd save him-
self You'd just kill young boys like yourself

That's right

Do you like that?

I'm really not interested in killing Hitler either
Paul said I want to kill the idea he represents for
so many people In years to come I'll cry over the
young boys I've killed and maybe if they kill me
they'll cry over me

They're probably just like you They were
walking fast now

Sure Paul said I'm sure they'd love to go to
me I bet they'd love
the bronze statues in
with you on a Spring

Saturday evening and looking at the sports clothes in
the windows I bet a lot of them like Mozart too
but still I'll kill them Gladly

"Gladly?"

"Yes, gladly." Paul wiped his eyes with his hands, suddenly tired. "Gladly to-day. I'll weep for them in years to come. To-day they're guns aimed at me and the world I want. Their bodies protect an idea I have to kill to live. Hey!" He stretched out his hands and caught hers. "What's the sense talking about things like this to-night?"

"But it's all a big fraud," Dora cried. "You're being used, and you know it. . . ."

"That's right," Paul said. "It's all a big fraud, the whole business. Even so, I got to fight. I'll be gypped, but by a little bit I'll do something for my side, for Mozart on a terrace at dinner. What the hell, it's not even heroism: I'll be dragged in whatever I say. . . ."

"That's too bad," Dora said softly, walking by herself. "It's too bad."

"Sure," Paul said. "Someday maybe it'll be better. Maybe someday the world 'll be run for people who like Mozart. Not to-day."

They stopped. They were in front of a little art store. There was a reproduction of the Renoir painting of the boating-party on the river. There was the woman kissing the Pekinese, and the man in his underwear with a straw hat and his red beard, solid as earth, and the wit with his cocked derby hat whispering to the woman with her hands to her ears, and there was the great still-life in the foreground of wine and bottles and glasses and grapes and food.

"I saw it in Washington," Paul said. "They had it in Washington. You can't tell why it's a great picture from the print. There's an air of pink immortality hanging over it. They got it in New York now, and I go look at it three times a week. It's settled, happy, solid. It's a picture of a summer-time that vanished a long time ago." Paul kissed her hand. "It's getting late, darling, the hours 're dwindling, let's get to bed. . . ."

They got into a cab and went downtown to his house.

The Ploughman

BY CRICHTON PORTEOUS

THE plough breast was deeply rust pitted the coulter worn as blunt as a saucer edge and the wood handgrips were split. He knew that Jim had bought it at Ashbourne only five months before for seven shillings though now he wanted four pounds. But it was complete except that there was no spanner in the slot by the handle stay. soon get another spanner

You don't need to take it said Jim resting his right boot on the stem and letting a beefy hand drop on his raised knee. I can sell it anywhere. How'd you need a plough? Give Machonichi the job thirty bob an acre for ploughing and cultivating. Damn cheap.

I've a fancy for doin' it myself said David looking self consciously down the valley to where an orange painted tractor too far off to be heard was creeping slowly down the dividing line between plough and buff green grass.

Fancy fancy — Jim ejected the word as if it were poisonous — what's fancy got to do with farming? A damn poor proposition it's been he went on more soberly but here if you go about it right is your chance to make a bit. Remember the last war.

If I buy it will you lend me Captain? broke in David hoarse but determined.

Don't be a fool Machonichi's making nothing much at thirty bob oh well please yourself said Jim. Ay you can have Captain but you'll have to feed him oats for that job. No working him out mind. Take him when you come for the plough eh?

He walked away He had wasted more time than he had intended, and he specially wanted to get to Bake-well early to see a few men before the sale started.

David didn't tell Ida about the plough till he rattled into the yard with it in the blue cart, with Captain following on a halter.

"Jim's letting the tractor do it, isn't he?" she asked. "Did he advise?"

"I don't care what he advises I'm running this farm, not him," answered David "The land's got to be ploughed"

"I'm sure Jim'll get it done the best way," said Ida, a frown coming between her dark hair and darker eyes "He can make money I wish."

But he had gone towards the stable He kicked the door back, thinking that if ever he married again he'd take care that there was no brother It was Jim this, Jim that, always Jim

The plough-pads were hanging oiled and ready from harness pegs How fortunate it was that he had not thrown them away, or tried to sell them, as no doubt Jim would have sold them long ago As David let them fall one on each shoulder his thoughts left Jim, and he wondered how long it was since he had taken out the pads that way before Ten years since his father died, and three or four years before that all the fields had been grassed Fifteen or sixteen years and yet the chains chinking against his legs seemed suddenly alive with an intimate familiarity Tossing one set over the sideboard, he slung the other over Captain's broad back The mahogany gelding was not used to the jingle and threw up his head with alert back-twitched ears and slewed prancingly to the length of his rope As David soothed him and buckled the collar-straps he realised this new problem neither horse had ever ploughed, could he manage with them? But he had to, now

He was thoughtful as he loaded from the stable the

three swingletrees the bundle of alder sticks cut from the brook side after breakfast spanners oilcan hammer mattock and spade and then called Benny from the shippon Benny was eighteen and had been a farm worker from leaving school but it had not occurred to David that a plough would be a curiosity to him When they had unloaded it in Eight Acre he knelt on a sack to make adjustments but soon was explaining the names and uses of the parts enjoying it too like a memorising game because he found that it was only with difficulty that he could recall several of the names himself The slade for instance which is the plough's main support and enables it to run steadily He remembered how his father had carefully taught him these things in those days just after the last war when ploughing was still worth while even in Derbyshire He remembered also how unwilling his father had been to put the farm all to grass again till he had been forced by costs and prices

My father would have liked to have been with us to day David uttered his last thought aloud as he stood up

He unhooked Cornflower from the cart unsaddled her buckled her pads on Of course he should have left her to the cart while the lands were set out but there was satisfaction in seeing the horses side by side in their unusual gear It gave him the feeling that he had already started ploughing

The field was long from north to south and narrow with a slight tilt to the west so that the furrows must all run the short way He was finicky over the marking pacing everything himself only letting Benny carry the sticks though he explained to him constantly the idea and reason for everything More than an hour passed before he was satisfied and anyone uninitiated might have thought the sticks left stuck up near the fences marked building plots Along the line where they were to draw the first ridge he had put six two

feet-high sticks in the hundred yards, suggesting a flimsy fence, every stick as carefully sighted with the rest as any umpire ever sighted a bat for centre at Kennington Oval. Had David had confidence, three sticks would have done, but at last, when he leaned on the stilts testing the plough's balance, he wondered if six were enough. He was so dependent on Benny this first time, he told himself as he levered the share point into exact position.

"Walk straight, whatever the horses do, never take your eyes off the sticks. A bad start takes a whole hell of a lot of working out," he warned, unconsciously word perfect from his father twenty years before in the same field.

Benny was between the horses with a hand on each bit. David shouted and the chains spun a little, then, went taut and straightened the hake. David bore on the stilts and watched the share bury itself, and the earth opened, beginning to fall in a frayed strip rightward. He bore down to get deeper, and the team stopped, despite Benny's cries. Ten feet of furrow had been turned—nothing—but David looked back with quivering excitement.

"Keep straight, whatever you do, keep your eyes on the sticks," he implored earnestly, unaware of repetition.

In the next twenty yards the horses stopped twice, unaccustomed to the strange implement following them.

"If we draw straight, we should touch each stick . . . turn them under," David, with dry lips, muttered another sentence of a far-away lesson. "Gee-ope!"

Captain impatiently mouthed his bit and tried to shake his head free, but though Benny felt his warm breath, he ignored it, staring ahead with the concentration of a pilot among perilous rocks. He walked on the first stick, as true as could be. At the second he was four inches rightward. He lugged hard, leaning leftward, his head touching Cornflower's blinker. At

the next stick they seemed right, till David shouted 'Whoa!' and the furrow slice looked ragged with a long slight curve as of a slackened bow.

'You're not watching the sticks,' accused David angrily.

It's Captain retorted Benny, hurt knowing how hard he had tried.

David walked ahead and began to draw a line with his heel only the grass was tough and not very closely eaten and when looking at what he was doing he had to take his eyes off the sticks so that his line was as uncertain as a slug trail and he gave up.

You know how to lead a horse surely don't let him pull you out he said sternly wrapping the plough lines once round each hand and gripping the handles as if he meant to drive the plough where he wanted solely with his own strength.

In the last fifteen yards the horses stopped four times chiefly because Captain kept fighting his bit. But at last the plough nose was balanced out and for a first furrow it was not too bad save for the curve between the first and third sticks.

'Now you've something more to go by, happen you'll do better,' said David though his tone was more gracious than the words. Uphill however the horses went more unevenly Captain pulling in jerks getting ahead pushing Benny over in spite of all his efforts.

What the hell? shouted David.

He fought with the plough trying mightily to keep it straight but as yet with both wheels still on grass there was scarcely any depth over the share to help him and the whole implement pulled out and skidded swiftly unimpeded ten feet before the team which had instantly gone quicker could be stopped. David was too bitter to speak lugging the plough the three swingletrees and the horses back by sheer angry strength till he got the share under the turf once more at the point where it had broken out.

"I can do it myself better . . . stand out of my way," he panted

Benny stood aside, crestfallen, while David flicked the lines viciously along the horses' flanks to let them know that now they were in the hands of a master. But after a dozen yards he had to give in. With no idea yet of the use of the implement to which they were hooked, or the reason for all the manœuvring, the shouting and tugging and slashing only increased the team's bewilderment, and Captain, in a panic to please somehow, made a sudden start almost at right-angles, tugging Cornflower with him and the plough on to its side. While it was being righted Ida came through the gate by the grey stone barn, though they did not see her till Benny had resumed his place between the horses and they were about to try again.

"Is this all you've done . . . in three hours?" asked Ida, looking along the crude furrow, her pale thin face set, yet in some way suggesting a smile and a sneer. "Dinner's ruined, I suppose you never thought "

"Dinner!" exclaimed David, surprised.

"Yes, how long will eight acres take at this rate?" she demanded coldly. "I heard Jim say a tractor could turn an acre in two hours."

"On Blackpool sands, maybe," said David, "but not here. If dinner's spoilt, we'll do without, it'll be no worse at tea-time. Go on, Benny."

She watched till the team showed signs of stopping again, then she at once turned to saunter back. David self-consciously threw a glance after her, then shouted "Gee-ope!" with more determination than ever.

At last the plough was levered out, the first ridge done.

"Now we can start, you'll see how to plough," said David, stooping with the spanner to put the large furrow wheel down six inches. He kept Benny to lead till Captain should learn to keep in the furrow bottom. David felt sure that he would soon get the ploughing

straight only now he had forgotten to reset the skim coulter which should pare off the edge of the furrow slice into the horse walk so that when the furrow fell over the grass was buried. It took many trial starts before he got that right and nearly another hour had gone before he finished the second round.

We shan't do our acre to-day as a good plough man reckons to, he said ruefully looking back.

It's heavy on the horses isn't it? asked Benny.

Ay, it is, said David for the first time noticing the dark sweat stain on Captain's ribs where the pads and straps touched. Ground sets when it's never been turned for fifteen years.

After that with the plough beginning to settle down as it were which meant of course that it was David that was getting more used to the balance and recapturing the knack of throwing his weight on the stilts in the right way just at the right time he could watch the horses more and saw how very heavy the work was. Cornflower was soon worse than Captain her dark brown coat a wet glistening black with a creamy lather where leather or chains rubbed. Chiefly this was because she refused to take the work leisurely. She wanted to hurl the plough along as though it were a heavy cart which once got going will trundle on easily. But the drag of the plough never lessening she kept plugging on at full speed and then abruptly stopping. Nothing they could think of got her to go any different. When she pulled her hardest Captain hung back.

We'll dig in then finish, said David, turning on the top headland after finishing the sixth round. She'll pull her heart out the fool.

Nevertheless next day it went easier and on the third day Captain had learnt to walk in the furrow and after cutting the next ridge David sent Benny muck spreading and went on alone. The plough had worn silver and slipped through as smooth as a knife. At last Cornflower had learned that it would never go

easier, and she plodded on as if born in front of a coulter, and Captain had become as her twin. David sang as he weighed on the stilts, and felt at ease, and had time to notice the earth smell. And it seemed to him that the earth was glad to have the matted grass pared off and to feel the air and light once more after fifteen years in darkness. He wondered how many times furrows had been opened there before, and suddenly had a strange potent realisation of his continuity with the men who had farmed that land in the past. While it had been grass he had had no such realisation, for, after all, grass simply grows, but ploughing is the work of man. How many had ploughed there? How many would plough in the future? Strange questions, these, that silenced his song. He wondered what manner of men had worked there before him, whether conscientious and good, or perfunctory, whether he were worthy to be ploughing there after them. Well, he would do his best.

The following day was Sunday. In five days he had ploughed no more than two acres, for, despite their new-learnt steadiness, neither Cornflower nor Captain could stand more than three or four hours a day. They had not been fed for it.

"The weather's been good, but if it's fine till Easter, you'll not get finished at that rate," said Ida at dinner. "I thought we'd go to Jim's this afternoon. He's ploughing thirty acres, and I bet it's finished."

So just after three David followed Jim, and was genuinely astonished to find the twenty-two acre Holt Meadow all brown and eight-acre Springbits the same save for the headlands, which Jim said off-handedly he didn't intend to bother about.

"Two furrows a time, ten hours a day and no winding time," he explained with satisfaction, waving his beefy hand over the rest. "If you want to give up, I'll take th'old plough back, I can get a fiver for it anywhere."

No thanks' said David slowly Every other furrow s an inch up and two inches wider what ?

Both ploughs weren t quite set alike Jim broke in, and you don t need to tell me that there s a bit of grass showing here and there cos that doesn t matter when the disc harrows have been over'

No I suppose not said David

Not it said Jim confidently ' Time s money and you re losing it I ll have to speak to Ida

You seem to have done that already said David smiling ruefully But now I ve started I ll finish

And from that they could not budge him for now he knew with satisfaction that what he was doing was the better job He was being true to the land and all that had worked it before him and what mattered beside that?

Hedge Singer

BY EISDELL TUCKER

The black-capped bullfinch, blunt of bill,
Fills his flushed throat with song as rare
As if glass bubbles broke in air
With honey-drops to spill,

Then slants his head and spreads his feet
And listens hard, till all at once
Faint from the common comes response,
Glass-clear and honey-sweet

Then down he flits, his flight a jig
About the field-encircling hedge,
As if it were his privilege
To bud it twig by twig

A Knocking at the Gate

BY ELLIS ST JOSEPH

It was one of those bitter black nights of midwinter when the cold wind spurts around corners and takes you by surprise you grasp your hat clasp your coat collar and bend your body to meet the blast you blink your eyes blindly you take one step ahead—when lo! 'tis if to mock you the wind subsides 'tis suddenly as it began You jaunt along in a tremulous cold as thick and solid as a chilled jelly

It was close to midnight

Nilhauser's way home from the moving picture theatre where he had spent the evening led through a lonely unsavoury part of the city It was an avenue of rundown office buildings tenanted mostly by rats abandoned breweries with chalk marked doors and broken windows squalid storage houses and a hideous tenement or two During the day it was peopled by considerable traffic but at night it was deserted There was no sound to be heard except the occasional thunder of a passing elevated train as it rumbled overhead The iron structure vibrated sparks from the tracks showered the gutter then the train was gone pursued by its own echo One could walk for blocks without meeting any one As for policemen they were rare birds here

Nilhauser would have preferred taking another and longer route as he had done on numerous previous occasions when the lateness of the hour had made him think twice before venturing into this dangerous district but the cold was so penetrating that he threw caution to the wind and hurried home with no other idea than to be indoors as soon as possible

He walked briskly on the outside of the pavement near the curb, preferring not to court the menacing shadows that lurked in the doorways. The regular tattoo of his hickory cane on the granite gave his steps a steady tempo. . . . Each lamplighted area was a welcome oasis in the blackness. Time and time again he glanced furtively over his shoulder to make sure that the footfalls he heard were only echoes of his own. Not that he ever really believed that he was being followed, or that robbers were hiding to ambush him, but still, there were such things as hold-up men and madmen—the city was full of them, and as long as he could remember, since he had been a boy, in fact, he had been afraid of dark, empty avenues.

He had not gone very far when he descried, in a dreary pool of light hardly a block off, a man's figure rapidly advancing in his direction. In a moment they would meet. Even then the click of the stranger's wooden heels, winged with sound, broke in Nillhauser's ears. Nillhauser was struck with a sudden unutterable dread. It appeared that the man was deliberately approaching him. An animal terror invaded his hair and flesh and heart, unreasoning, physical in its manifestation. He did not know whether to flee for his life, or stand lifeless, or somehow force himself forward. But he knew only too well that his heavy coat and overweight would betray him in flight. And it would be fatal to be found where he was, midway in the darkness between two feeble lamp-lights. His safest course was the boldest—to hurry on, in the hope of encountering the oncomer in the full glare from a lamp-post which they would both have to pass.

They met directly beneath the hanging electric globe.

Avoiding the man's glance by the simple expedient of drawing his head into his collar, bending forward and precipitating himself blindly past his neighbour, Nillhauser, rattled by dread, misjudged the distance—with

the result that he butted the stranger such a violent blow as sent them both reeling and brought them staggered face to face

Where d you think you re goin ?' the man rasped And now suddenly a thing happened as unexpected as it was inexplicable Judred by the habitual bashfulness of a lifetime and innumerable like performances Nillhauser should have mumbled I beg your pardon! These words—regardless of whose the blame—probably would have been strangled in his throat by fear And in that case he would have coughed and repeated as loud as he could Excuse me sir! But no apology at this moment escaped his lips

Maybe it was the quality of the man's unpleasant voice which so completely measured up to Nillhauser's mood that it shattered him as the vibrations of a tuning fork will crack a crystal tumbler of similar frequency Or it may have been his sudden vision of the man's face It was a face the shape and features of which Nillhauser had always hated For the fraction of an instant he looked full upon the unknown face then with both hands he raised his stick aloft and brought the whole momentum of his heavy body down in a smashing blow upon the stranger's skull

The man's arms shot skyward and he sank slowly like one drowning in the ocean

Nillhauser sprang upon him

His action had the violence of a compressed spring suddenly unconfined He dealt with his knobbed cane one mad blow after another Countless times the stick descended and catapulted off at a crazy angle for it struck blindly as though battling in the dark with a host of invisible opponents Unused to the tremendous effort restricted by his heavy overcoat Nillhauser's cheeks blew round with exertion His breath rose and fell with the blunt weapon and not until he was as dead to the air as the prostrate body at his feet did the onslaught end Then almost doubled by cramp he stood

in the open, deserted street, while the lamplight above him cast his shadow on the corpse

A moment later he was tearing down the wintry wind with an open mouth and unblinking eyes, one hand clapped to his derby, the other swinging wide in a tight grasp the hardwood knobbed cane wet with blood

At first he ran without direction, fleeing from his own fright. The thin bitter air seemed to offer his body no resistance as he broke through it. As a matter of fact, he could feel neither the cold, nor the wind, nor his own freezing flesh, even his feet were numb to the pavement, so that he felt he was flying. But at last his mad self-fear capitulated to the fear of capture, and a definite objective succeeded his random course. He started for home. Of course, he did not go straight home, that would not do at all. It was a long, roundabout, almost labyrinthine voyage of the streets, meant to cover his track completely and throw off any possible pursuit. Although he knew for a certainty that he was not being followed, it eased him curiously, that he was taking a course not even he himself could retrace.

And not during all that time, from the moment of murder until he entered his own door, had he seen or been seen by a policeman.

It was his good fortune

Only when he was safe and secluded in his furnished apartment, did the fear of apprehension leave him and the terror of himself return. Having bolted the door upon his own shadow, he invaded the living darkness of his room and fell into a chair with a frightened little moan.

"I am alone with a murderer," was his first thought.

Then his teeth began to chatter and his limbs to shake, and he grew very cold, as if he were suddenly fallen ill of the grippe. He clutched his turned-up collar to his chin. For a long interval he sat in complete vacuity, without a thought in his head, until at last he had recruited sufficient strength to face his crime consciously.

Yes he said I have done it I have committed a murder I Nillhauser am a murderer

Having said this and given to his words their full measure of horror he grew sane He switched on the electric light closeted his hat and coat with unaccustomed care and repaired to the bathroom where he poured himself a long draught of the brandy he kept for medicinal purposes Because the knowledge that he was imbibing was in itself an intoxicant he sipped the drink very slowly before his shaving mirror and looked to see as well as feel the effects of the liquor In no time at all his strained white face became quite red Almost a stranger to alcohol he found it a friendly tonic He began to thaw feeling first the cold of the streets then the intense warmth of sudden shelter and finally if not a sense of well being at least an indifference to his sensations and whereabouts

Nillhauser was then thirty four years of age He had been law abiding all his life Indeed he had learned backward in his respect for people and their property and by so doing since earliest childhood had risked the scorn of those he respected sooner than lose his own respect by scorning them Being allergic in his reactions he credited others with his own morbid sensitivity This curious kind of philanthropy is interpreted by mankind as timidity or shyness or effeminacy and like all forms of charity occasions in the recipient an unconscious obligation which rapidly matures into resentment So if he had few friends and was not generally liked it was not for any grudge that he bore humanity but by token of his very love

His appearance too was of a part with this Rather short and plump with a promise of obesity in his small nose thick lips and protruding eyes he was an ordinary looking man His soft white hands however were surprisingly well formed and would have appeared lovely on a woman Already at his early age he had the misfortune of being bald

How could this quiet, peace-loving man have committed a brutish crime?

The blood still whistled in his ears as he sat on the bath-tub, holding the forgotten glass in his hand, remembering . . . He finished the drink at a gulp

When he returned to the parlour, he was startled by a sudden fear. he could not recall what he had done with the bloodstained stick. It was nowhere to be seen. Had it been left at the scene of the murder—or lost during his subsequent flight—or had it been dropped in the doorway of his apartment-house? Such personal effects can be traced by the police, inexplicably identified, and produced later in the courtroom as convincing proof. He remembered reading an interesting case in the newspapers recently, where a lost collar-button, having revealed the criminal's identity, had served at the trial to secure his conviction. Quickly feeling for his own collar-button, Nillhauser was relieved to discover it snug in its hole. But the stick—where was that?

After a frenzied five minutes, during which he even contemplated the crazy plan of returning to the corpse, Nillhauser discovered his cane resting quite frankly and visibly in an umbrella rack. It looked absurdly respectable there. Having made an unsuccessful attempt to remember how it came to the place,—which was all the more astonishing as he was by custom a slovenly and unhabitual man,—he carried the horrid relic to a wash-basin, where he scrubbed it with soap and hot water.

As he jerked his cupped fist up and down the slippery stick, he inspected the surface for chips or scratches or other tell-tale marks. It was marvellous how impervious the hard wood had been to its punishment. It might have been made for just such use.

Then he thought how in all ways chance, which usually betrays the criminal, had been to him a brilliant accomplice. The perfection for which others so vainly plan, and always fail to attain, he had achieved by sheer accident.

There was no blood on his clothes Not a button was missing not even a pin His flesh was unscratched unbruised unbroken. And if this was not fortunate enough the weapon had disappeared forever transformed into a shining unmarred walking stick that would court only unsuspecting admiration

His plump fingers boldly replaced it in a conspicuous position in the umbrella rack.

Criminals Nillhauser told himself can be associated with a crime by only three ways aside from the circumstantial of which in this case there is none either they are seen in the act or if their subsequent behaviour arouses distrust, they are followed and caught or an investigation of motives leads to the discovery of what man had the cause and occasion for committing the deed Because no dismal scream no rapid tread of feet on the pavement, had punctured the awful silence that followed it he was confident that no one had witnessed the murder Although his panic and flight might have given rise to suspicion it was apparent he had not been followed As to the third—the motive? Could anyone learn that?

What was the motive?

Nillhauser permitted himself a faintly superior smile Then his thick little lips broke into a grim laugh Here was a hard nut for the police to crack! Let them hunt let them harry let them look high and low They would never find it And how could they? The murderer himself did not know his motive

All that anyone will ever know he said to himself is that a man was attacked and murdered by an unidentified assailant motivation unknown Even if I had been captured I could not have told them why I killed him Of course they would never have believed me the stupid fools They would have thought that I was withholding information lying to protect myself

Ah I would almost deliver myself up to them if they could tell me why—why I had done it!

Now a torment of self-terror grew in him His pounding heart dilated, swelling against his ribs so painfully that he clutched the full flesh of his chest in an effort to ease himself Even during the horrid moment after the killing, it was not the *thing* he had done, but that *he* had done it, which had frightened him His crazy flight home had been more from himself than from the corpse Forgotten was the murder in the memory that Nillhauser was a *murderer*

And yet he did not know why he had become so

But in that case, he must be mad If neither robbery nor passion had been his motives, what could explain his behaviour other than the random course of a sick brain? Yet he did not feel insane, his mind was not demented, he could think—indeed, more clearly now than he had ever done before Then there must somewhere be concealed a motive, incredible as it might seem, which would account for and excuse his action

Nillhauser threw himself on the sofa and closed his eyes Sleep was out of the question But he thought that he could think better if he blotted out the extraneous and was allowed to relax

That face—

It was an unimaginative collection of features so arranged as to form a human countenance The small turtle-lidded eyes, bored by their own blindness, had never seen enough to widen them, the nose was flat as a boxer's, the loose, flabby lips were barely closed as on a mouthful of water On either side of the head the ears stuck out, appendages destined less for mental comprehension than for pulling—but it would not do to isolate each imperfection and submit it to simile and interpretation, only a caricature would result, whereas the united effect of the features appeared as nothing but a common ordinary face Walk down a populous street, and one person in ten will approximate it

"Yes, it was because of his *face*," Nillhauser mumbled

behind his fingers that I killed him! As long as I can recall I have instinctively disliked such a countenance I have never failed to find the man odious who bore it Occasionally when I have encountered such a person and overcome my repugnance so far as to see him again preferring to be ruled by reason rather than emotion I have learned later at great cost that it would have been better to have respected my first impression Such men are villains

But why have I always hated this particular face—of all faces? And why did the spore of my hatred passive for so many years explode into sudden virulence on that dark avenue and at this late hour? Why did I kill *him*? *He* had never done me any harm

He folded his soft white hands upon his stomach and in a voluptuous review of previous inflictions by which he had suffered for the first time that evening he captured some repose His wrongs had always been wrought by men who looked like that For instance only that morning there had been a man on the subway But there had been many before that!

Take Mentmeyer

He had been Nillhauser's employer more than three years ago he had had such a face Perhaps he had been a little skinnier a little shorter than the man to night but the features the expression precisely the same type *There* had been a scoundrel if ever there was one! From the first second he had caught sight of Mentmeyer Nillhauser who was no fool had known what to expect from him Still he had told himself What an idiot I am! Why should I condemn a man merely because of his face? He can't help having ears that stick out from his head any more than I can help bulging over my belt Mentmeyer is a good sort This optimism had soon dwindled into despair Mentmeyer had overworked him underpaid him denounced him for stupidity and finally fired him for knowing too much—a vain precaution as it had happened because a fortnight

later Mentmeyer had been desperate enough to thrust his big ears through a rope and hang himself.

But it was not Mentmeyer's ghost whom Nillhauser had killed on that dark street. Mentmeyer himself had been a ghost. His face, like the many before and after, had but *returned* to be recognised. Was it possible, then, that it had been the apparition of a past more forgotten than remembered? Could there have been one original, of which all these faces were copies?

However, no sooner did he recall one, than another came before—an endless procession of mocking masks, all alike, hollow eyeless replicas that met his gaze with a blind stare of unrecognition and passed on.

"Enough, enough!" Nillhauser cried at length. "I have remembered enough. I must be mad, there is no motive. There is no *first face*. Just as I have always feared dark streets and felt I was being followed, without reason or cause, just so, since earliest childhood, I have clung to an imperishable hatred for this type of countenance."

Yet he knew this to be wrong. "In my boyhood I had ample reason to beware of empty streets. I was not a boy like other boys, any more than I am now a man like other men. The happy care-free days of irresponsible youth were the romance, not the reality, of my childhood, indeed, in those days the horrors which were hiding in wait for me, far from being imagined, were too real ever to be forgotten. Being boys of my own age, these monsters were none the less monstrous, they were more so. Because I was different, they despised me, because I was defenceless, they hounded me, because I could not hide my hurt, they doubled their unappeasable fury and denied me even a brief respite.

"My days were spent in a melodramatic flight from their unmitigable pursuit. The public street was the amphitheatre in which my ignominy—my cries, shrieks of pain, humble prayers for mercy, mingled with their gleeful shouts and hellish laughter—was exposed to the

common vulgar eyes These boys (even now I shudder to use the word which recalls such happy memories for others) those angelic innocents always they timed their attacks with devilish cunning only when the street was empty of grown ups when there was no possibility of help for me or punishment for them, then only did they take their pleasure It was during my trip home from school and those dark hours in the afternoon when my well meaning mother closed the door upon me and sent me out to *play* that the boys regarding this as their gaming season would hide in wait for me behind stoops and porch posts and pounce upon me with bloodcurdling Indian war whoops They were pitiless

How I hated them!

Awake in bed long after my parents were deep in slumber I used to devise the ways and means of accomplishing my desired vendetta I wished my enemies dead Each and every one of them must die a separate long drawn painful death Self hypnotised morbidly I stared in the darkness at holocausts of red handed butchery prefaced by appalling torture wherein I drowned out the victims groans and screams of agony with my own tortured but victorious laughter Especially for one boy my evil genius—particularly for him

Nillhauser sat bolt upright on the sofa as if some one had knocked on the door He broke into a cold sweat at the vision which had been vouchsafed him It had been a boy's face—a face with just such turtle lidded eyes such a flat nose such big loose lips and ears that stuck out from the sides of his head—a face half formed never forgotten!

Oh no! No! Nillhauser breathed in a mouthful of horror It might have been the face of a fury flown down from heaven to hound him for his crime but he knew that face—he knew it he had known every face that ever resembled it

On a dark deserted street under the Elevated a police

man would be turning over the body of a dead man, bringing its face to light. The features were battered almost beyond recognition. Nevertheless the officer would make a slow methodical inspection of the murdered man's apparel in an effort to identify him.

"But I'm innocent! I didn't kill *him*!" And at odds with himself, in the same breath he cried "I killed the *wrong man*!" Now, for the first time, when he realised the futility of his crime, after having grasped his one motive and felt it slip through his fingers, the burden of guilt engulfed him. It was almost more than he could bear. Because a boy with an ugly face had beaten him years before, he had killed an innocent man in whose face had been a suggestion of the boy's. A fine motive, indeed! A good reason to take a man's life! If this were the proffered sanity of cause and effect, Nillhauser preferred to be mad. Would the police give credence to such a fish story? No, they would want proof, and Nillhauser wanted proof too.

But where was he to find proof?

He wondered whether the stranger's corpse could still be hugging the cold wind-swept pavement. If it had not been as yet carted away, even if an officer now stood on guard beside it, Nillhauser might be able to catch a glimpse of the countenance, he could pass by casually, cast a horrified glance upon the body, and in the fraction of a second determine whether or not it had the face he had identified.

During the brief moment before the murder, Nillhauser might have masked the man with the image in his own memory. Such things happen more often than people know. But what if the man's features were now as obliterated in reality as once the boy's had been, in his mind? He would be taking the risk for nothing. An old adage occurred to him with an emphasis which forced its conviction upon him. "Criminals always return to the scene of their crime"—the very course he was considering. Then it was true, the police weren't such

fools after all Almost almost he had caught himself in a trap of his own contriving!

There was but one alternative and it was probably the better He wondered why he had not thought of it before His mistake had been the other way round it was the boy's face which had been forgotten

Hurrying to a telephone book he began to hunt through its pages in the hope of finding a name he had not spoken in twenty years Though the boy might have died or moved away or might not have a phone in his own name it was a possibility worth the trial One look at the face would be enough It would be final he would know He tore the paper of the directory in his haste looked pages beyond turned back too far advanced slowly—and there it was He could hardly believe his eyes It was waiting for him at the top of a column of print that formed a pedestal for it He could not be mistaken about such an unusual name

Nilhauser dialled the number

He smiled with childish glee to hear the regular buzzing at the other end of the wire Only when after a full minute no answer was forthcoming did the significance of his call occur to him A bell was ringing in the dead of night What could he say when a voice spoke?

Who is it? Nilhauser Whoever you are what's the matter with you? Why are you calling at this late hour? I killed a man That was all he could think of saying he slammed the receiver down before anyone had answered

It would not do to telephone Not that it would incriminate him or in any way associate him with the crime but aside from the fact that this was scarcely the hour to converse he had no convincing reason for asking to call in person the following day His one course of action was clear he must control his impatience until the morning or preferably the afternoon go to the ascribed address confront the face and then—what would actually be true—explain that he had made a

mistake. He would depart, at least cured of his madness, even if not cleansed of crime.

The one difficulty was in waiting for day to break. It was four o'clock. He would have to wait until eight, nine, maybe ten—

It was past eleven when he awoke from a sleep of sheer exhaustion. As if going to bed, he undressed and took a very hot bath, then shaved, massaged his scalp with a tonic which guaranteed a new growth of hair; and after much deliberation, he selected a complete change of clothing, including his best suit, which was a little too tight for him. Finally, in his greatcoat and derby, with a scarf wound round his neck, he looked in the wardrobe mirror with big lugubrious eyes. Something was missing. Of course, his cane. He drew the stick from its rack, struck a pose, tapped his derby to a rakish angle and set off in a burst of bravado.

Because his destination was hardly two miles off and the day not unbearably cold, Nillhauser determined to walk.

At first he was startled to see how few people were abroad, but remembering that it was Sunday, he permitted himself a patronising little laugh at his own forgetfulness and the others' piety.

In view of the previous night's exertion, it was surprising how fit he felt. It had been years since the balls of his feet had cushioned the pavement as they did to-day. Even his depressed spirit had vanished and been followed by the transport of a vague elation, such as one feels who begins a lively holiday or goes to attend a friend's wedding. As he strode onward, block after block, he seemed to grow bigger and broader, until his head and shoulders were those of a giant; a sense of great courage invaded his bones, at every stride, his cane struck the granite a smart blow gravid with this new-found strength. It occurred to him that never again need he fear dark empty avenues, nor be disturbed by the features of any man's face.

When he arrived at his destination a humble private house on a residential street he leaped up the steps like a boy And he was so lost to everything but his new found freedom that after the bell had been rung and the door opened to admit him he passed into the darkness without noticing the black crape that was hung upon the portal

Fresh Paint

BY GEOFFREY GODWIN

ARNOLD JADE, mate of the *Berta* of London, stood in the centre of his bridge, gazing at the symmetrical ripples stretching into infinity from either bow. Rising late over a calm and silver ocean, the sun exuded delicate translucence which, creeping through the darkness, lightly touched a series of fragile, motionless clouds.

Six bells chimed melodiously and the steward—"Punctual as ever"—clattered up an iron ladder bearing a mug of cocoa.

"Morning," Jade greeted him, taking the mug. Idly blowing, he watched tiny waves speeding across its surface. "Good weather ahead," he commented.

The steward nodded. "Aye," he said. "But how long before we pick up the convoy? I've a feeling in my bones, Mr. Jade, there's danger in the air." The little man frowned gloomily at a seabird which, secure on the foremast truck, screeched derision at its circling spouse.

Jade grinned. "We've a hundred miles to go," he said. "What's worrying you, Tom? Is it that wench we saw you with in Baltimore?" He peered ahead through binoculars.

"See anything, Mr. Jade?" Tom asked anxiously.

The mate shook his head. "Not a thing," he answered, and drained his mug.

Hearing the captain leave his cabin, Tom scurried below. Captain Cutcliffe climbed slowly on to the bridge.

Tall and broad, magnificently bearded and tanned,

he personified the mariner of fiction. His uniform was shabby, yet worn with an air which reflected competence and character.

Nice morning, Arnold, he said briskly.

Grand sir, Jade replied.

They stood side by side, protected by canvas dodgers from the light, bitter breeze.

Just the day for drying paintwork, the captain suggested.

Aye, Jade said, but it's a bad omen—summer weather in this season.

Cutcliffe laughed carelessly. I'd not worry about omens—he began when in the speaking tube a whistle shrilled.

Jade bent over the mouthpiece. What is it? he demanded.

Cutcliffe heard a confused murmur before Jade turned to him.

There's a sub reported operating in this area, sir. Sparks says all shipping's warned to keep a good look out.

The captain stroked his beard. Falling away from his wrist, the sleeve revealed a taut, hairy forearm.

Well, he said quietly, 'put a man in the crow's nest to relieve that chap at once; set one man on the fore-sle head and another on the poop. I'll stay around from now on.

Jade blew his whistle. The stand-by man came running, cigarette end still drooping from his mouth.

Take Ferens' place in the crow's nest and send him onto the fore-sle head, snapped Jade. Tumble somebody out to keep watch from the poop.

The stand-by man nodded. Aye, aye, sir, he said, then, daring much. Submarine, sir?

Jade scowled. No, he grunted. It isn't. You get a move on.

Cutcliffe chuckled as the man departed. You're quite a fire-eater, he murmured. You know they call you the lying Jade forrard.

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"Is that so?" grumbled the mate. "I've been wondering why they grin when I tell 'em anything. How d'you know, sir, though?"

Cutclyffe opened his mouth, then closed it again. Head to one side, he listened. A muffled boom drifted over, more sensed than heard.

"Depth charge," muttered Jade.

Cutclyffe crossed to the speaking-tubes. "You there, Chief? Listen. There's a U-boat playing about somewhere round here. Give her all she'll take. I'm not going to lose my ship—the stinking old tub."

At that moment the man in the crow's-nest spun round. "Periscope two points on the starboard bow, sir," he hailed excitedly.

Through binoculars the uniform waste of water resolved into a small, concise pool. In it, feathering the water on either side and astern, a periscope serenely cruised. Even as they watched, it turned like some strange swan's head, they had the uncanny feeling that invisible, malevolent eyes scrutinised them.

The captain dropped his glasses. "Hard a-port," he roared.

The helmsman, hitherto standing automaton-like before the binnacle, swung down on the helm. The donkey's rapid chatter rose above a sudden gurgling of water beneath the counter.

Bubbles darted from a point ahead of the periscope, and Cutclyffe stared as the trail raced towards them. They were turning slowly—edging away from the enemy.

At last he glanced at Jade, gasping as the torpedo swept by the stem—so close that for an appreciable time it was hidden by the flared bows.

Jade shouted into the speaking-tube. "Sparks," he cried, "send out an S O S. The sub's attacking. Won't be long now," he added confidently to Cutclyffe. The periscope dropped from sight.

"Maybe they're going?"

Cutcliffe calmly shook his head Preparing to
surface he said

A dark form rose slowly in the churned up sea water
cascading down the sides

Gunfire now Jade prophesied

A hatch clanged in the conning tower and a white
jerseyed man clambered out Abandon ship he
hailed through a megaphone

Cutcliffe ignored him They presented the smallest
possible target now

Men grouped about the submarine's gun

Get below he roared to his own crew

Some sauntered from the deck others took up
positions of comparative safety from which to watch

The first shell came—whining wickedly searing their
eardrums It hit the sea and water rocketed towards
the sky

Another followed The funnel lurched—tottered
and slowly fell carrying the aerial with it It lay
across the boat-deck broken stays drooping almost to
the water

Cutcliffe coughed in a cloud of pungent smoke
I'm going to hoist the ensign he said

Fetching the tattered red duster from the wheel
house he made his way down to the deck

Tom's excited voice issued from the galley Cripes!
he cried S

Men (' eyes

On h (iem all,

crawled across the poop and bent the ensign to the
haliards Deck quivering as the rudder quadrant
swung the stern skidded sideways across the sea A
shell dropped far to one side

Jumping to his feet Cutcliffe hoisted away furiously
Catching the breeze the ensign blossomed out

The captain ran then from poop to bridge breathing
harshly He had taken barely two minutes

Nice going sir approved Jade

Rather helplessly they stood watching A shell hit the ship above the water-line, penetrating the after-hold

"Several pounds of best chilled beef gone," muttered Cutclyffe sardonically

The next shell carried away part of the starboard lifeboat With a splintering crash its after-end dropped as the falls parted The boat hung bows up, mournfully gazing at the sun

"How long?" queried Cutclyffe, "how long? When I was last at home, Arnold, I had to listen to my small nephew declaiming

'On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a sieve they went to sea'

Thank Heaven it's not stormy "

Jade giggled "I remember it—had to learn it at school— Look! "

Far away a speck showed in the sky, rapidly growing larger Their ears caught the sound of an aero engine

The crouching seamen heard, and a ragged, optimistic cheer rang out Men melted like snow from the submarine's gun, and the conning-tower echoed with the crash of a closing hatch

Cutclyffe and Jade shook hands solemnly

"Saved," they breathed in unison

As the submarine dived, a monoplane shrieked from the sky The water beneath it exploded like a gigantic dew-coated mushroom— A miss

Soaring, the plane turned and dived again The next bomb fell closer to the U-boat, and water seethed in anguish Then, after perhaps the fifth explosion, a dainty field of bubbles spread across the sea

"Got her!" exclaimed Captain Cutclyffe

Dropping a further bomb, the monoplane swooped low over the tramp, dipping in salute Jade waved his cap enthusiastically

Not far distant a destroyer raced towards them, half-hidden in foam Behind her came a second

Slowly and unsteadily the submarine surfaced her conning tower cracked and dented periscope bent in halves For some minutes before the hatch opened they heard a muffled clanging Then one by one the crew appeared on deck hands high

As his craft lurched the German lifted a megaphone

Come and save us he appealed

Cutcliffe cupped his hands Ye can swim for it he roared

The submarine listed over and settled a little deeper
Bitterly the Germans stripped and started on their swim across a hundred yards of icy water

Cutcliffe stopp'd his engines To the helmsman he shouted Put her back on her course

Slowly the tramp turned and waited almost unmoving beam on to the splashing blowing swimmers

The foremost destroyer blared triumphantly on her siren as stern first the U boat sank

Cutcliffe jerked his own siren lanyard snorting when it came away in his hand He put his head over the dodger malevolently regarding the shivering Germans who fluted the water round the Jacob's Ladder

'Aye ye perishers he growled and if my paint hadn't been wet, I'd even ha' picked ye up

Yellow Cross of David

BY ERIK JOYSMITH

JACOB stood still and looked around him, then he opened his suitcase and took out his pyjamas. He took off his jacket and started to undo his tie. When the porter returned he had a nurse with him. She was short, and her belt creaked when she moved, but she had a good smile, and Jacob, as he always did with uniformed persons, wondered what she would be like without it—in her street clothes?—or without them either? But she had a grand smile and a good, well-rounded body.

“Nurse will show you where to go,” said the porter. “I’ve told the doctor, and he’ll be along in a minute or two. He’s got to get up first. I’ll have your clothes, please,” he said, and he took the suitcase in his hand and went out.

The nurse gave Jacob a smile and said, “This way, please,” and led him into one of the dim wards and pointed out a bed. The sheets were turned back with unbelievable precision, and the pillow was creaseless and full-bosomed, white, with curving shadows. “Get in, please,” she said, “the doctor will be along presently. Ring if you want anything.”

I won’t have to ring, thought Jacob, you’re here, and I want you. But it was just a fancy. You couldn’t drag the first nurse you saw to bed with you. Must be nerves, he thought.

“Don’t forget to ring,” said the nurse as she went out. She had a grand smile, crinkly at the corners.

Jacob lay in the bed.

The sheets felt cold and hard as steel the pillow unyielding under his head The blankets were tucked in so firmly that they stretched tightly over him taut like the cellophane wrapping over a chocolate box leaving a cold corridor down both sides of his body He looked about him and could not believe it There is a limit to human comprehension and he just couldn't get this It seemed impossible that an hour ago he had been at home—safe or as safe as you could be these days and then Kurt coming and the oncreeping terror, wrapping and binding your stomach and then that walk through the fog starting guiltily like a criminal at every step and riding in the bus—it had been horrible and all the time the binding terror of it so that every figure took on the uniform of a policeman, the short heavy knuppel in his hand and a pistol in his belt

He couldn't believe it He wasn't used to this sort of thing He might have to get used to it but now he wasn't and it terrified him so that his hands clutched the whiteness of the sheets and he crossed his feet far down in the chilly vault of the bed to keep from shaking.

I must get this into some sort of order he said to himself I ought to know what is going on I ought to marshal facts and put some sort of order to my mind It ought to go something like this—I Jacob Rosenberg 36 bachelor fur merchant of the City of Hambourg being of sound mind and knowingly of my own accord enter this hospital this ward this bed for the purpose of having my stomach cut open I am perfectly well sound in wind and limb all that is wrong with me is that I am damnably frightened I have no illness or malady and they will just slit me up and sew it up again to show the scar I shall not be hurt in any way only frightened out of my life—— He stopped He had known it was crazy when it was all jumbled in his mind but now he had set it out clearly going over every fact carefully in its right order it sounded impossible—impossible to be happening to him He

heard his breathing, whistling and rasping in his nose, shallow and quick, like a runner who has just completed a hundred yards dash. His heart thundered in his ears—but he couldn't believe it. It seemed impossible. Damn it! it was impossible. Those things couldn't happen to him.

From nowhere the doctor was by his bedside, standing over him, looking down. He had pyjamas on under his coat and trousers, and his eyes looked tired, with deep rings beneath them. He wore gold nose-spectacles, and his bald head gleamed in the dim overhead light.

He was clean-shaven, but Jacob thought he would have looked very grand with a fine beard.

"Hello," he said, and smiled. "I'm Doctor Kortner. You're Jacob Rosenberg? I got your note. It's all arranged. How do you feel?" But before Jacob could reply the doctor had taken his wrist in his hand, which felt cool and slightly moist, and was taking his pulse. The doctor's eyes and the doctor's mind went far away as he counted. You could see them go. Then it was over. "Good," he said, and dropped the hand, "that's fine. You'll be all right," and he sat on the bed. "Now let's take a look here," and he unbuttoned Jacob's pyjama jacket, then he adjusted his stethoscope and went over Jacob's chest.

Jacob looked at the gleaming bald head and the tip of the nose, the silvered tubes and red rubber tubing of the stethoscope. The doctor had a nice smell, he thought—very clean. "I wonder what he hears?" And he knew that it would be fun to run down inside oneself and shout rude things up at the stethoscope. What a sensation! Perhaps Dr. Kortner would write it up in the medical journals, and Jacob Rosenberg would become a famous case in medical history, instead of a terrified nonentity, lying in a hospital bed.

When the examination was over, Dr. Kortner sat up, slipped his stethoscope down round his neck, and felt for a packet of cigarettes. When he had found them

he offered Jacob one and lit it for him then he lit his own. They both drew on their cigarettes in silence. Jacob didn't know what to say and the doctor appeared lost in thought. He held a match-stick between the thumb and first finger of his right hand, the red black point just showing beyond his thumb nail. Gently he rubbed the match end on Jacob's stomach. He smiled.

You'll do, he said. You'll be fine. It's nothing at all really. You'll be fine. It will be nothing you'll see. Nurse will give you an injection and I'll see you in the theatre in an hour. That will be nothing. In there we shall just put you to sleep. It will be afterwards—Well, good luck. And his grey-clad figure stooping slightly was disappearing into the shadows of the corridor.

The match-end had felt a tiny round point of cold on Jacob's stomach. He still felt it—cold and then hot. It will be there, he thought. It will be on that spot. It will be right where the match was. If he'd had a knife it would have been then. That's where it would be, all right. There, there and he felt his stomach contract muscle hard and resisting. Right where the match had seared his white flesh. That was the spot. He thought of the knife—razor sharp lumpily parting the resisting flesh or perhaps effortlessly slipping through it. Slitting and shearing at the touch of a finger. Cutting swiftly followed by the warm flow of blood.

Or perhaps it wasn't like that at all. How could he know? To cut his finger made him sick. How could he bear this then? He wasn't even in intolerable pain. There was nothing for the knife to alleviate. The knife gleaming sharp and thin. Poised ready to cut. He wished they'd come for him. He was so frightened he didn't want much more of this but of course when they did come and tell him it would mean he would have to get up. Then it would really start.

Perhaps Kurt had been mistaken. Perhaps there was no danger at all. Perhaps it was nothing just a

mistake—imagination Perhaps he could get up and dress and start walking out into the fog again Through the two pairs of double swing-doors he would go, leaving them thrum-thrumming behind him—out into the fog and home again, back to his own familiar rooms and his own familiar bed—to sleep—to wake in the morning—to dream Surely it was all a dream. He would wake and find he had been dreaming. When he did find himself walking he had a dressing-gown thrown over his shoulders, and he passed down many corridors and past many doorways, but when he arrived he found he had only reached the operating-theatre.

The table felt hard, and through the thinness of the blankets' texture he felt the metal strike upwards, reaching at him with cold steel fingers, a slow, penetrating, metal-cold fog seeping round his body as he lay He stretched and cracked his toes to ease the tenseness of his muscles crossing and uncrossing his feet, always in the same rigid order, as though the very regularity could help him He yawned often—half-stuffed, crack-jawed yawns, agonizing in their suppression He could feel the centre draining-ridge hollow beneath his spine As he yawned and stretched, his body went exploring through the thin covering, replying to the on-creeping coldness of the steel by advance reconnaissance parties, spying out the shape and form of every tiny inch of the table and sending back warmth to fight the penetrating cold

The whole theatre was white, white against white in bewildering tones Over by the wall was a wheeled metal table on which instruments had been laid out. There were rubber gloves, obscene fingers in their empty rubberiness, powder beside them There were wash-basins with bright chrome taps and a foot-operated swab-bin Two nurses moved back and forth They were dressed in white gowns from head to foot and moved silently and efficiently about their tasks One was short and fat with a smiling, round face, red-

cheeked and jolly the other the older one was thin and tall for a woman. She had dark red hair and a very bad mottled complexion from which protruded an enormous gristle white nose. Her face was long and her eyes kind. Many human faces resemble animals and this woman's resembled the horse.

Occasionally they talked together in low whispers these two nurses. They were both Jewesses. Jacob thought.

If he looked up from where he lay on the table he looked straight into the dome of a multi light backed by a mirror of many facets. In each mirror he saw himself. If one reflection moved they all moved. In every mirror he saw a dark head covered by a white sheet all moving together. He was reflected in every mirror and it terrified him. His stomach was heaving with fear and he had never felt so frightened in his life. The theatre was too white too hot and too frightening a maze of soft grey tones barely distinguishable slowly palping in and out, backwards and forwards as he breathed. He hated it and he fitted the toes of one foot against the other to keep from jumping his feet about.

The anæsthetist was young and dark haired. He had a white face and a deep red line on the bridge of his nose where he had taken off his glasses. His hair was dark and thickly curling standing up from the closely cropped sides where the flesh showed white and waxy through the stiff short black hairs. He had thick lips and when he smiled he had a gold front tooth. His hands were white even against the whiteness of his gown and a white mask hung loosely round his neck. How is it? he said, smiling. He seemed to come upwards and sideways out of nowhere to say it and then to retreat again.

Fine. Jacob replied clamping his jaw firmly to keep his teeth from chattering, —I think Fine. When does it start?'

"Oh, any time now," replied the anæsthetist
"You'll be O K "

"Yes "

"You'll be O K It's nothing, really Just a little
smell and it's all over "

"Really," said Jacob

The man's face was quite comical He had thick
black eyebrows which jumped up and down when he
talked—an unconscious trick, but it made Jacob want
to giggle Suddenly an insane desire to burst out into
a howl of laughter seized him Really, the fellow does
look very comical, he thought

"No time like the present," he said "Let's go
now "

"O K "

"Now "

"All right "

"Well, come on What do we do? "

"You do nothing I do it," replied the anæsthetist

"Well, come on, then Let's start now "

"O K "

"You said that," said Jacob, he suddenly felt very
irritable

"There's no need to get cross "

"I'm not cross "

"No? "

"No, I'm frightened "

"Oh, I see "

"*Will* you start? " Jacob was surprised to hear
himself shouting "Now "

"All right," said the anæsthetist "You breathe
regularly and count after me That's all " He placed
a pad over Jacob's eyes and, dripping ether on to the
gauze, put the mask over his nose and mouth "—Now
count After me—one—two——"

"Buckle your shoe," said Jacob

"Very clever," said the anæsthetist

"It's damned clever "

Three—four——

Shut the door Jacob thought he was shouting
Really the stuff smelt abominable It was the coldest
sweetest sharpest smell he had ever experienced

That was very good said the anæsthetist Now
you count Come on five—six——

Throw some bricks——

Exactly Now seven—eight——

To swing on the gate—properly as it should be done—
as an experienced gate swinger should do it required a
great deal of practice You put your right foot on the
lower bar your left foot on the ground Then firmly
gripping the top rail with both hands and swinging the
body backwards you paused All being ready you
shouted Go and brought your weight forward at
the same time pushing off with your left foot and putting
your head back so that the branches overhead rotated
and her head just passed the bottom of your vision as
you passed each other She would be smiling too It
was great fun but it was very important that it should
be done in the right way Often he and Else would be
walking home from school not thinking of it and then
when they got to the gate without speaking a word
they would both swing at it and then the hinges would
squeak and they would both laugh and be very happy—
swing swinging there arms extended and head back
and overhead the blue sky and the branches of the tree
revolving and much nearer Else's face smiling near
his own

There was a noise like bells deep under water and
right in Jacob's brain was a large bumble bee which
for some reason kept up a continuous buzzing Per
haps he's trying to get out he thought perhaps that is
what it's all about Perhaps they'll cut a hole and let
him out then he won't buzz any more Yes that's
what it's all about really—just making a hole to let

this?" he said "What is this I find? What is this childish writing I find in your exercise-book? Read it Read it to the whole class Turn round and read it out aloud"

The little girl took the book and, turning round, shot a terrified glance at the class Jacob was not sure, but he felt she looked at him for help Then she started to read

"I love little pussy,
Her coat is so warm,
And if I don't hurt her
She'll do me no—horm."

All the class laughed, not because they thought it particularly funny, but they knew that if anyone was made to read out anything like that, you always had to laugh There was some grown-up joke. If Else had been made to read out one of the many rhymes that were in circulation about the master himself, then they would have seen the joke As it was, they all laughed politely, enabling the master to tap on his desk for silence He drew himself up

"Let the censure of your comrades be sufficient punishment," he said "Else Renniger, you may go back to your seat"

Jacob knew that he hated him, and he knew that he was very sorry for Else. He saw that she was nearly crying Her eyes were moist, and he was very sorry for her Hers was the only name he knew, and he felt it was a bond between them

After the lesson, in the draughty corridor, studded with classroom doors, Jacob found Else standing looking out of the window, some books in her hand Timidly he came up to her and said "I liked it—about the pussy, I mean—they shouldn't have laughed I thought it was nice I liked it I like pussies," and he offered her his own sweets that his mother had bought him that morning They were the first sweets of his own he had

ever had, and he had decided to keep them and eat only one every day to make them last but he gave the whole bag to her and she took it. She looked at him and he saw that her eyes were brown like a toffee drop when you take it out of your mouth and hold it in your hand to see how it is getting on. Her eyes were still wet with unshed tears.

Thank you, she said.

That night at home before he went to bed he said to his father

I love little pussy
Her coat is so warm
And if I don't hurt her
She'll do me no—harm

Then he laughed but his father only looked at him and didn't laugh at all but ever after that Jacob and Else were friends together.

From many miles away over many miles of wind and moving grey water thinly in the vastness of the towering air he heard a voice—a voice which he dimly recognised as his own, say Thirteen Fourteen he answered himself fifteen he shouted back at himself across the widening chasm—a chasm which seemed to be opening at his very feet separating him from himself.

Else was fifteen that day Fifteen years old Fifteen years of walking upon the earth Jacob had been there for sixteen years, but that was different It was her birthday—fifteen years upon the earth.

There were fifteen candles upon the cake and she hadn't been able to blow them all out at once It took three puffs and then there was one over at the far side that didn't go out and she had to wet her fingers with

her tongue and pinch the small, yellow-orange flame. Everyone laughed very much. Else's father was there. He was very fat and was always laughing and slapping people on the back. Jacob was afraid of him and his jokes. He worked for the Railway Company, and was hardly ever home, because his work happened mostly at nights. He wore a peaked cap with a bright metal badge on it and a long coat, and he was at this party because Else was fifteen that day. After they had all eaten and were sitting before the fire, Else asked her father to tell them a tale. Jacob remembered now the exciting story of the beautiful little princess who pricked her finger on her fifteenth birthday and fell asleep and all the palace with her for a hundred years. The King and Queen, the courtiers and the serving-maids, the horses in the stables and the hounds in the courtyard all asleep, and surrounded by a thick-set briar hedge, all quietly sleeping in perpetual sunlit silence, waiting for the King's son who was to set them free with a kiss on the soft lips of the beautiful little Princess. Jacob longed to be a Prince himself, so that he could come riding on a fine white horse and free Else by a kiss on the lips, but he didn't tell anybody. It was just a dream.

. . . .

"You're not counting," said the dreamy voice of the anæsthetist. "Come on sixteen—seventeen."

"Eighteen—nineteen," said Jacob. "I hate this. It's too hot and too cold."

"Count," said the voice.

Jacob counted.

When they reached the thirties, Jacob was flying very high indeed. Nothing was under him but soft, warm air, gently caressing his body, while far below was the mighty ocean, thundering and crashing upon sharp-pointed rocks that split the giant rollers and threw them back in a froth of white foam. He could hear the wave

ascending to him and every now and again a sharp spatter of spray would strike up at him wetting his body

Else rowed very well. She knew how to keep the boat moving evenly and rhythmically with the minimum of effort and the maximum of speed through the water. The only sound was the soft chunk chunk of the oars in the rowlocks. From his seat in the stern Jacob motioned her to pull over to the right where he had seen a trout break surface so that the spinning bait far astern should pass over the spot. When he judged the spinner was about over it his fingers tensed on the rod his eyes intently looking at the quiet water astern of the line where it entered rutting and lining the surface just under the counter. When the trout didn't strike Else altered course again so that they went on up the shore parallel to the bank where the bottom suddenly dropped off to fifteen foot or so of dark water and the little waves of their rippling wake broke with a soft rustle on the sandy beach. Farther in the pines came almost to the winter flood mark and under them was a thick carpet of needles. You could see the white walls of a hut through the straight trunks of the pine trees. The house had a door and two windows painted green. It looked very lonely just now. The windows were shuttered and the door fastened. They had done that that afternoon.

There's our little house Jacob said Else

Yes there it is

I wonder—

Yes?

Of course we shall. I was wondering if we would ever see it again.

Of course

Yes of course. I'm sorry—

—sorry?

Yes we agreed not to talk that way. Of course we

shall see it all again Oh, Jacob, it's been so lovely—so lovely! ”

The lake was smooth as a ballroom, its distant western edge merging into the lemon of the evening sky, while up above was the approaching dusk of night already star-pierced On one side of the boat they appeared to float almost soundlessly through space, while on the other were the hard, dark shapes of the trees and, under them, the sandy beach in between, their gently rippling reflection in the still water A wedge of ducks flew close overhead, and they could hear the swish and beat of their wings on the air

“They aren't biting, Jacob,” she said “They're feeding all around, but they aren't striking” She wore a red-and-white checked shirt and blue shorts Her feet and legs were bare and her hair tumbled about her face Even in the approaching dusk you could see how tanned she was

“No,” he said, his eyes tense on the line astern, curving away from the tip of the rod, rippling and rutting at the water

“To-morrow——” she began and then stopped

He took no notice “To-night they're not biting,” he said “Let's forget that other and go on up to the point and sit on the shore ”

“All right,” she answered

“Shall I take the oars? ” he said

“No, it's all right, Jacob I'm sorry I said we wouldn't talk about that, didn't I? And then I broke it first ”

He didn't answer

When they rounded the point he started to reel in his line, and she pulled hard on her left oar Soon the keel grated softly on the sand and they got out and pulled up the boat Jacob lifted the picnic-basket from its place on the floor-boards They walked up to the pine trees Afterwards, the remains of the meal beside them and the light gone from the sky, they lay, not

touching side by side on the fragrant bed of pine needles. The white checks of her shirt gleamed and her soft hair merging with her face made her head a shapeless smudge in the uncertain light. Only when she pulled on her cigarette the light would leap up revealing every feature for a brief moment then it would die down until it became only a red pin point glowing once more in the darkness. Far off a fish jumped and close at hand the stocky shape of the boat was silhouetted against the leaden mirror of the lake. Jacob burrowed into the soft prickliness of the pine needles with his hand they felt cool and faintly damp and stuck to his fingers.

Else he said

No she said I can't

You mean you won't

No Jacob I can't she said

—not even for me?

No Jacob not even for you

Look Else It's all right really I promise It's just—

It's been fine Jacob Let's leave it she said

Is that final?

That's final she answered

They didn't speak for a long time. Lying there cut off from the world and each other. Lying each in a pool of his own thoughts separate. Jacob threw a fire cone so that it arched a black streak against the depth above them and fell in a phosphorescent fountain just beyond where the boat lay.

Poor Jacob! she said and took his hand. Poor Jacob! I'm sorry. Really It's just not right that's all. We had a fine time but that's not right.

He took no notice his hand lying limp and unresponsive in hers.

I'll bet they'll be biting to-morrow he said

Yes

—Too late then—to-morrow

"It's been good, though, Jacob Don't spoil it "

"If only we'd got one to-night—just one," he said

"Poor Jacob! "

"Perhaps I should have changed the lure," he went on; "but, then, we've been very successful with that one I suppose it's just the general bloodiness of the day," and he turned over on his side away from her

"Don't go away," she said

"No? "

"Don't go away because of what I said It's been good Can't you leave it like that? "

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said, and he was surprised at the coldness in his voice "It *has* been a bloody day "

"It's our last It ought to be our best," she said. "—If only you hadn't said that—if you'd just left it out "

"Oh, shut up! " he said, and immediately wished he had kept quiet

"Jacob"—her voice was soft and pleading, but he didn't answer this time

A little night wind blew, and the pines sang above them, answering the soft music on the shore A full moon had come up, casting a broad silver path on the lake, and in the end Else had rowed back by herself. "Shall I help you with the boat?" he had said, but she had pushed off, leaving him unanswered and alone. He lay down upon the pine-bed again and rested his head on his hands That would have been the best thing, he thought I'd never felt like that before, and now I've spoilt it This is the last night—it's too late now I've spoilt it Just then he knew that he would never see her again

He heard his own voice say thirty-three, but it wavered and cracked like a radio set with two stations tuned in on the same wavelength Cracked and breaking—thirty-four Cracked and breaking—thirty-five Cracked

and breaking—thirty six and wheeling across the star
shot universe he heard his own mind speaking to him

Give me my scallop shell of quiet

Lovely lovely words beautiful soft sounding words

Give me my scallop shell of quiet
My staff of faith to walk upon——

How did it go?—faith to walk upon—yes

My scrip of joy immortal diet
My bottle of salvation——

My bottle of salvation—my bottle of wine—that
bottle of clear crystal wine on the terrace overlooking
the still blue waters of the lake—and the butterflies
Or that spring welling out of the ground and running
down on to the flat stone splitting and jumping in
sparkling profusion that time in Spain the yellow hills
crouching like leopards in the far distance and the blue
shadowless vault of the sky above, listening quietly to
its own glowing heat

He knew that it was only yesterday He had been
sitting in his office and it was only yesterday The
familiar desk with its leather tipped blotting pad the
shaded desk light and the marble pen tray lay before
him There was a knock on the door and before he
could say Come in there she was—almost as he
remembered her Fair hair and brown eyes Else
Reinniger standing her hands behind her back resting
on the door knob her back flat against the panels

Come in he said

Yes she answered —I have

I see he replied

There was a long pause

He seemed to be looking at her from a far distance
She was the same girl but yet changed in some in

definable way He saw her dressed in a checked shirt and shorts, her hair windblown, rowing a boat upon a lake, yet this was not the same girl Else Reiniger—yes, but the little girl who had recited with tears in her eyes before the class “I love little pussy”—no He did not know quite what to say When it has been a long time and there is too much to talk about it is difficult to know where to begin Sometimes it is better not to say it with the lips, much can be said with the eyes After a long time, from far away, she said. “You like my hair this way?”

“I thought there was something different,” he answered “Yes, I like it It’s different, but I like it It suits you” But he knew the difference was inside her—not in her hair

“I’m glad,” she said

“Yes,” he answered

Another pause, and then she lifted her head “It’s funny, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it’s a small world,” he said “How did you come to be here? It’s years since—it must be fifteen years or more”

“—Or more,” she answered

“You remember the lake?” he said, “—and bathing at dawn?”

“—Lying in the sun and the sand sticking between your toes”

“—And fried eggs cooked on a wood fire”

“—Trolling at sunset”

“—And then you couldn’t catch anything”

“—That last awful evening It should have been so good”

“It was nearly—I spoilt it”

“Did you? Perhaps it was me”

“No”

They suddenly stopped Everything seemed to be said If they had gone on they would have been back where they were fifteen years ago So they both stopped

Then she came into the room and he came round from behind his desk. She held out her hand.

Hello Jacob she said and he saw that she was trembling. She made it sound as if she meant it every word of it. Hello Jacob.

Hello Else he answered it's been a long time' and he took her in his arms and kissed her upon the lips. Same old war paint he said wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. Same old you. You haven't changed a bit.

Suddenly he felt a stinging blow across his cheek. Dirty swine of a Jew she was saying and there was hate in her eyes. Dirty rotten Jew. She stood before him her eyes flashing. Dirty Jewish dog she said.

The bells were very loud in his mind ringing and clanging in a wild cacophony of pealing sound. Starting high up and crashing down like bricks upon a stairway. He knew it was this very evening. The fog swirling outside and the fire burning brightly in the hearth—this very evening.

When Kurt knocked three times and then twice on the window in their usual signal he went round to the back and let him in. He never opened the front door after dark now. You never knew who would be standing there. Then Kurt was talking low and fast explaining and entreating. At first he didn't believe him. It seemed so impossible so utterly preposterous. Things like that might happen to the next man but not to him—Jacob Rosenberg.

I've just come from the hospital. Kurt was saying. It's all arranged. I heard it from a friend in the Police Station. You must go, Jacob. You are in great danger every minute you stay here. You must go to

the hospital Dr Kortner will see you there It's nothing really, but you must go now Someone has informed against you You are accused of rape Rape of an Aryan girl fifteen years ago You must go, Jacob Innocent or guilty, you haven't a chance They will take you into protective custody—Backenwald You'll never come out alive You must go, Jacob—now. All is arranged Here, take this note to Dr Kortner. He knows Everything is thought of Now come—come, please, and quietly ”

He didn't believe it, it was all too impossible, but he had only waited long enough to pack a little leather suitcase he had by him Then they slipped out into the fog As they left the house two cars drew up at his door and five uniformed men got out He caught the glint of a revolver in the hand of one of them They hurried round the corner My poor home! he thought I'll never see it again

Kurt and Jacob caught a bus They sat in the front seat and turned up the collars of their coats. They did not speak, but they could listen to the conversations of the people around them The conductor was a little drunk He sat on the seat nearest the rear platform and spoke loudly with the passengers near him When they arrived at the stopping places, he called them out, pronouncing them in a foreign accent for a joke Everybody laughed, and the conductor hiccoughed

“You ought to call out in yiddish in this district,” said a young man who had a white scar over his left eye and who wore a uniform

The conductor stopped He spat on the floor “Dirty Jewish scum,” he said

Several men grunted and the young man in uniform said, “Heiliter!”

Jacob and Kurt kept their faces turned to the darkness of the bus window and pulled the collars of their overcoats closer

A red and blue iridescent cloak twirled up out of space. Humming and singing like a giant top it wrapped about him so that he became one vast, twisting cone of colour. Thirty seven, he shouted. Thirty-eight he whispered. 'Thirty nine —barely a sound. Forty he gasped. Forty or Else and he thought he might be laughing—laughing at his own joke but actually he had lost consciousness.

The intense light of the shadowless overhead cluster slashed down upon the intent white garbed figures round the table. It cut out in crude cardboard shapes of white and grey the waiting figure of the surgeon and his assistants sexless in their long gowns and masks covering all save eyes and arms.

The anaesthetist looked up from the patient's head and nodded to the surgeon who took his knife and cut a four inch incision in the iodine stained flesh showing through the window in the surgical gown covering Jacob from head to foot. The flesh parted, willingly opening silent lips the wound showing pearly white at the thick edges. The surgeon asked for gut tied several ligatures and then swiftly and skilfully began to sew up the incision. The light beat down the air reeked of ether and was oppressively hot. There was no sound but the breathing of the patient. At the back of the theatre the two nurses were whispering. —It's the police, one was saying. The SS guards are after him. Dr Körtner has done this to save him. They will try and smuggle him from the country when he is a little better. Poor man! I hope—

They were wheeling the trolley from the theatre the patient lay stiff and white all colour drained from his face his nose projecting sharply into the air—waxy white and the flesh drawn back from the nostrils which were dilated like those of a racing pony. He lay there quiet and still under the white hospital gown which

might yet bear the dreaded yellow badge of the concentration camp the yellow badge of the Cross of David and the word Jude crudely scrawled in paint upon the back The surgeon peeled off his gloves and removed his mask Tiny beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and he needed a cigarette '

A Dance at Muhlberg's

BY KERRY WOOD

A DANCE? Yah! A dance to night?

Big Wasyl leaned on his pitchfork beaming at Otto who had given him the news. Harvest was nearly over and the crop was good. The price of wheat was not a matter for great satisfaction but it would do. Wasyl had forty acres of new land in cultivation on his homestead all managed in three years time. He had started with nothing and now he had the wheat off forty acres. It would amount to twelve hundred bushels perhaps a little more when the threshing machine finished its work this day. Count off the price of three or four hundred bushels, say to pay for the threshing for the cost of seed for the rent of a binder and the price of twine for the sheaves and for the wages of Otto his occasional helper. Call it five hundred bushels even and there would still be seven hundred bushels left. At sixty cents a bushel it gave him over four hundred dollars. Oh yes! That was a pile of money for a young man. A pile of money for a young Ukrainian who had only three years before started with nothing but a Canadian homestead and a strong set of muscles. Wasyl Roscovitch had reason to feel like dancing and he beamed to hear news of the night's event.

In the empty Muhlberg house it will be. Otto told him. *Georges will take his accordion and make the music.*

Yah! That's good. That's fine.

Wasyl laughed again. He would have four hundred dollars clear of debts and he had a three roomed house.

built of good clay and straw, plastered thick on a poplar-sapling frame. It was smoothly whitewashed outside and finished with coloured kalsomine inside. The roof was shingled, in the manner of frame houses, and there were real glass windows and a proper door. Building it and putting furniture inside has cost him most of the profits of last year's crop, but it was a good house. He had red-and-green oilcloth on the floor, store-bought chairs and table, and a good stove in the kitchen and a heater in the living-room. There was a small radio, even, and from it he had learned new words of English, and he spoke better than most of his neighbours. In the bedroom was a glossy bureau where he kept his good clothes, and in a corner was a handsome big bed. Oh, it was a very fancy home, and Wasyl was proud of it.

He had a barn, too, made of "mud", as the Canadians called the Ukrainians' clay-and-straw constructions. The barn was big enough for his three horses and his two cows and the calf that one cow had recently added to his stock. Behind the barn were smaller sheds, one of them housing four pigs. Two of these were bred sows, and soon there would be young ones. Another shed was for chickens, and still another place, piled high with straw on the roof, covered his deeply dug root-cellar, in which he would store potatoes, onions, cabbages, carrots and turnips and the rest, not forgetting the garlic onions. He would have enough and plenty for his food all the winter to come. Enough for more than himself. Enough for two.

"Yah!" Wasyl grinned again. "I will take Anna to the dance, I t'ink."

Otto looked sideways at him, not stopping his work of pitching sheaves into the rack. Otto turned his eyes back to the stooks, and he said, bluntly.

"Wasyl, you are not awake in the head! You are maybe fast asleep, about Anna."

The other quit beaming.

"What means you?"

Otto spat once

You are a good mans Wasy! and that is why I speak I am not glad for to see you asleep about Anna

Hah? What is wrong maybe with Anna?

I am friendly with you and I will tell you quick But I want no trouble see?

No trouble?

I mean between you and me who are friendly I am going to tell you something about Anna

Yah Wasy! s throat contracted Go on

Well this Anna she is not always playing right with you Wasy! She goes not to the dance with you to night because she goes with another This other is my own brother John who told me

Wasy! pitched three bundles five bundles into the rack in heavy silence his eyes darkly smouldering

So! Anna goes with another behind me'

Otto said quickly Look friend, no trouble between us eh? Make you no trouble Wasy!

No trouble for you Otto

Thus assured Otto came close and put his hand on the other s arm

Wasy! I tell you something more! Wasy! this Anna—she is not for you You want a wife soon eh? Sure you do You gotta house you gotta farm You wanta wife yah! But Anna—— What is she? Have you been in Anna s house like I have? Have you seen the food she puts on the table to her father? Eh? I tell you Wasy! Roscovitch this woman is not for you No! Besides in the heart she is—pouff! Like that! No man can please her for long That is why I say you are not awake in the head about Anna

Wasy! hunched away from the other s hand savagely attacking a new stook

I go to the dance and I speak myself to Anna about what pleases her and don t please her

No trouble now Otto repeated stubbornly

"Look, there is friend feeling between our families, and that means my brother, John See?"

Wasył nodded

"I speak to Anna"

The rickety old cars, the teams and wagons, and the saddle-horses were thick around the yards of the Muhlberg place that evening Wasył walked the scant mile from his own house, and he walked slowly He had shaved off his week's whiskers and put pomade on his yellow hair and brushed it down flat, like the city young men at Edmonton He had changed his shirt and pants and put different boots on He was dressed in his best, but he was taking no joy in the fact

"I show her a lesson," he said, in repetition "That Anna, she cannot play with me so easy"

Minofski's violin and Georges' accordion were tuning up, getting into harmony, when Wasył walked into the Muhlberg yard Loud shouts of laughter came from the large, one-storied old house, and a steady clump, clump of heavy boots, beating time The windows were dark, and Wasył noticed this as he drew near Otto came quickly out of the open door, crossing to him

"Hallo, Wasył, my friend," greeted Otto "Look, Wasył, it is changed since I told you this afternoon John, he called for Anna to come to the dance, but Anna was gone already She came here to-night with Steve Boychuk See? Not with John So-o-o——"

Wasył laughed harshly

"So I can punch Steve Boychuk, heh? Well, I no do it, Otto I speak myself to Anna I think maybe you are right, about me having sleep in my head But first, I speak to Anna and tell her what I t'ink Where is she now, huh?"

• "Somewhere inside, dancing," Otto said, and chuckled "Everybody forget to bring coal-oil for the lamps, so we got no light But we stamped and yelled so loud Minofski and Georges had to start up the music We

will dance in the dark until the coal oil comes You better wait for light before you go hunt Anna

I find her easy She is bigger than all the other girls

There are other big girls better you should wait for the light Otto tugged on his arm And while you wait Wasył look what I got

He pushed a dark bottle into the other's hand

Go on—drink! It is good and strong

Wasył shook his head and handed it back

I am mad now without drinking I go find Anna

He strode into the house The partitions had been knocked out after the Muhlbergs left leaving one large room that was now used by the district for a dance hall and meetings It measured about thirty feet square with one corner raised a few feet above the main floor to make a platform On this the musicians were stationed out of harm's way The rest of the space was jammed with young people dancing The smell of garlic and of bootleg potato whisky combined with the hot sour aroma of perspiration making the air evil despite the wide open door and the gaping windows But no one took offence for it was dance night The plank floor pulsed under the hearty onslaught of steel shod farm boots and the young folks bounced foxtrot fashion to the rhythm of an energetic polka Very little could be seen in the room except the swirling light dresses of some of the girls and a vague pale blur of faces

But Wasył did not stop for long Anna Blinoff was a big girl nearly up to his own tall shoulders So into the swaying merry makers he suddenly charged and his hands reached out after brushing aside a little man and he gripped the waist of a tall firmly rounded girl

Hi! she protested

'Hah! Wasył muttered and pulled her roughly close so that he could talk in her ear You play a fool of me huh? I show you a lesson

He was clumping in time to the music and now his big

arm swept completely around the girl, crushing hard on her pliant waist, and suddenly, easily, he lifted her off her feet. He heard the startled rush of her breath expelled, then she started squirming to get loose, for his grip was none too gentle. He swung her towards the door, still beating time to the music.

"I am going to take you and teach you what you are," he growled in her ear. "I am through with you, but first I teach you a lesson."

By this time the girl had got over her surprise. Before he could gain the door, her hands dashed out of the dark and clenched firmly on to his hair. She jerked, quickly and with strength. Tears came unbidden to Wasyl's eyes. He sought to pry her loose, but the more he tugged at her wrists the worse it hurt him. He had to release the girl to save himself, and she seized the opportunity to draw breath and start a vocal storm.

"You great pig, you! What you mean, grabbing a girl in that way, nearly breaking me in pieces. Heh? Who's lesson will you teach me, huh?"

It was not Anna! In the dark he had made a mistake and got hold of the wrong girl. Wasyl jerked his hands off in confusion.

"I sorry," he started to apologise. "I very sorry."

"You will be worse sorry," the girl promised, and she gave his hair another jerk.

"Hey!"

To save himself, he lunged towards her. She deftly retreated, jerking again and making the hot tears of pain pop from his eyes.

"Hey! Wait!"

"Wait for what?" she demanded. "For you to get manners, maybe? Fffutt! I'll teach you quicker myself."

She jerked again. Wasyl roared like a wounded calf, and the dancers howled their mirth and made a clearing around the struggling pair. The music became loud, and the rest, watching in the dusk, pounded feet in time and cheered on the girl.

Give him more Vashna! Give him a beating!

Vashna! In the midst of his pain Wasył caught the name and identified her. She was the daughter of that good farmer Comas Borsh who lived at the far end of the valley and was the first Ukrainian to settle in the district. Wasył had heard of Vashna Borsh's daughter. A beautiful girl he'd heard but so big that none but little men could come around her. And what girl wanted a little man? So! This was Vashna Borsh who had him by the hair. Easy then for Vashna was a good girl and well raised.

She wrenched at his skull again as though to prove it. Wasył's temper got warm. He lunged at her once again trying to grab her. But quickly lightly Vashna danced away whirling him at arm's length by her firm hold on his hair. As he sloughed to a stop against the wall she suddenly loosed her hold of his hair and ducked her hands to his knees. So quickly was it done that he had no time to save himself. She had jerked his feet out from under him and with a swing crashed the man wildly through the open window and spilled him head first on the ground outside.

A tremendous shout came from the dancers applauding her feat. Wasył regaining his feet grinned despite himself. A strong girl that Vashna. And no fool either.

He dusted himself off and circled the house to the door again. A man met him there waiting for him.

Look Roscovitch—I am the man that brought Vashna here.

So?

Yes and you have insulted her!

The man was small and could not be expected to fight the large Wasył with his fists. Something glinted and Wasył dodged aside to miss the knife. Then he flashed out big hands and grabbed the other. The knife was wrenched loose and knocked to the ground and Wasył lifted the little man up to his own face level.

"You hear me now," Wasyl said softly, straight into the little man's face "I am pleased that you are quick to go after me, if I have offended. But this time it is a mistake. I got hold of the wrong girl there in the dark, and I am sorry it caused trouble. I go to tell her I am sorry. So will we agree not to fight?"

The little man, feeling the swift, awful strength of Roscovitch's hands, muttered that he wanted no fight.

"Good. That is wise," Wasyl said, and lowered the other to the ground. "Stay you clear, then, for I go to dance with Vashna."

He went on into the house. The music had stopped and the dancers were grouped along the walls. Out in the centre of the floor stood a big girl, Vashna. Even in the dark Wasyl sensed the woman's beauty of her.

"You have come back for more?" she challenged.

"I come back to tell you I make a mistake. I would not have you think me rude, like that."

The dancers clapped their hands, and Vashna said, lightly.

"All right, then. I do not think you rude."

"That is good," Wasyl rumbled in answer. "For now I must throw you out the window, to teach you how it is done right!"

The young folk cheered. So did Vashna. Wasyl started to cross the floor to her, and suddenly she lunged forward and grabbed him, pushing him back towards the wall again. Almost she succeeded, for her rounded arms had strength in them. But Wasyl got his footing in time and braced himself. They strained against each other, pushing and wrestling like two school-children, while the rest hooted and cheered, spurring them on.

"You are strong," panted Vashna.

"Maybe you are weak," laughed Wasyl.

She pushed harder, in answer, and Wasyl gave ground for a moment and then, while she was less wary, he got hands on her waist and easily, gently, swung her off her

feet and raised her high above his head. She kicked and yelled while the dancers howled their joy at the man's sudden victory. He carried her across to the window she had put him through and swung her still kicking out through the gaping space and held her suspended a moment above the ground. Then he lifted her back into the room.

That is how! he announced and eased her to the floor and held her so that her straining arms were pinned firmly to her sides.

Now I show you she shouted struggling anew. But Wasyl held her like a man can hold a child and in a minute she stopped writhing panting with wasted exertion. Perforce she was close to him almost leaning against him and the hard strength seemed to have gone from her limbs and left in place a softly feminine roundedness. Wasyl was quickly aware of this tingling to the allure of her.

Music! he roared loudly. Now we will dance. The violin started a slow sobbing piece with Georges' accordion rippling in the background to make a beat for the dancing. Slowly Wasyl guided the girl out to the centre of the floor stepping in time to the gypsy tune.

You squeeze too tight she panted.
I have heard that a tight grip is needed, for you
Wasyl said in a whisper.

She was silent a moment leaning hard against him. Unconsciously his hands tightened on her.

You are hurting strong man
Ho but if I let you loose you will play a trick
No I will dance
Then dance

He whirled her away at arm's length then jerked her back to him and caught her in the American way and they swayed into the music's rhythm. Feeling that the play was finished the other dancers surged on to the floor and the music swelled louder to be heard above the dance noise.

The man said "I am Wasyl Roscovitch, and I am glad to meet with you, Vashna Borsh "

"I am glad, too, Wasyl." She chuckled a little "It is good to meet a man who is big enough to be bigger than me "

Someone had arrived with coal-oil for the lamps, and the lights flamed on one by one The jollity seemed to subside a little in the revealing light, and a silence settled on the throng, and the music soared strong and sweet Wasyl and Vashna, as the yellow light flickered brighter, studied each other with frank curiosity She saw a giant of a man, with a rugged, strong-hewn face The blue eyes were twinkling down at her, his admiration undisguised Vashna was a beauty, right enough, with the smooth white-and-red colour of the broad-faced Slav girls She was large, but gracefully moulded in woman's fashion Instead of the puffy dance-dresses of the mail-order catalogues, Vashna wore clothing of her own make styled in the tight-bodiced, full-kirtled design of her old land. It suited her well. Wasyl's arms, holding her, seemed to tremble for all their great strength

"I am still not sure," he said softly, "that you are not planning to play on me a trick "

"What kind of trick would I play? "

"Like running away, maybe "

She shook her head, smiling For a little they danced in silence, and then, as they neared the door, she whispered

"All right I am going to play the trick "

She shoved against him and rushed him backwards through the door into the night Wasyl went, but he kept his grip on the girl, and she was still in his arms as they came to a stop outside in the dark

"Again you win over me," she said

"Ah, but you did not try to stop me, that time "

"No "

"For why not, then? "

Ho because I thought you wanted us to be outside here maybe away from the others

Vashna laughed quietly knowing herself understood Wasył dropped his arms from her and they started away from the doorway The girl suddenly leaned close and said

That girl Anna Blinoff is coming out the door now Does it mean anything?

It means less than nothing Wasył said easily Let us walk

Anna ran after them calling

Wasył! Wasył I have been looking for you

Go look for Steve Boychuk or John he answered and Anna stopped

Quietly along the road they walked Wasył and this big girl Vashna Borsh No word they spoke for a long time and at length they were opposite Wasył's farm

This is mine he said pointing

Show it to me

He took her through the gate and across to the edge of the wheat field where the new stack of straw from the threshing was piled high against the sky He told her of his crop and of his gains describing how the land had looked three years back when the poplar trees had been growing thickly where the harvest field now stretched before them They went back to the barns and by lantern light she saw the chickens the pigs the cows and the horses and the calf even the empty root cellar ready to keep the garden vegetables firm and sweet all winter long

Finally they went to the house and he showed her how carefully he had built it and how large He paraded the store bought furniture displaying his treasures proudly All this time Vashna had said nothing listening and keeping her eyes busy Now Wasył stopped talking looking at her and waiting for her to speak She stood quiet a moment longer glancing around her in the house

There are many things you lack here she said at

last, and she pointed at the bare windows, lacking curtains to make them cheery, at the naked cupboards, needing coloured drapings, at the table, wanting a gay, red cloth

Wasył laughed "These be small things"

"Yes, maybe, but they make a home"

"No," differed the man, and his blood pounded loud in his heart "A woman makes a home"

Vashna smiled at him and untied her head-cloth

"You have a woman," said she.



“They Required of us a Song”

BY RALPH BATES

My friend Yeo had talked so often and with so much distinction of his village of Beauchamp St Michael that when he suggested that I might some day be pleased to spend a week at the manor I at once expressed my desire to do so. We went to Beauchamp St Michael that week-end. It was Yeo's curiously flavoured speech that had awakened my interest, for his county of Berkshire neighbours my county and from our hilly eminences one may even descry his village.

Beauchamp St. Michael was indeed very lovely and very stately. Except for the rooks in the manor park, which made a kind of decanal chant with the parsonage rooks, and the occasional passage of cart-wheels over the flinty roads, the village was utterly silent. A great wheat-field, at that time freshly furrowed so that the rooks of both colonies flapped over it daylong, stretched away from the manor to the edge of an abrupt chalk escarpment, which fell into the soft, meadowed expanse of the Vale of White Horse. Behind the village rose a huge chalk down, faintly violet with a profusion of harebells, a folly of beeches stood at one end of the hill. The village was almost invisible from the fields. Not even the church tower overtopped the foliage of domy beeches which entirely hid Beauchamp St Michael, and there were only two lanes and one field-path within the village bounds which gave even a partial view of that lovely little building of the eleventh century.

The village was completely withdrawn from even the untroubled world that in all that region still resisted the

clamour of modernity During the whole of that week I did not see a newspaper in Beauchamp St Michael except the very conservative *County Herald* whose editor exercised his stately function with a sententious piety that was fortified by a stubborn conviction that the most creditable state of mind is an unalarmed doze It was impossible to believe that anything had happened, or would happen in Beauchamp St Michael

From the very first moment of conversing with old Mr Mortimer Yeo I realised whence came the unctuous flavour in my friend's speech It could not have been the mere effect of continuous propinquity, because my friend had spent a great part of his childhood and youth away from home It must have been because of his admiration and affection for his father and his continual remembrance of him Squire Mortimer Yeo spoke a pure Addisonian English which I fear to spoil in the remembrance in which if indeed his speech had in it anything that was not of that period echoes of Donne occasionally sounded

You admire the sermons of the metaphysical poet sir I ventured to say upon the third day of knowing him

Indeed I do and have profit in them but I would rather read the disquisitions of good Archbishop Laud he replied He was I at once discovered a Laudian High Churchman and something of an antiquarian in the ceremonies of the Anglican Church In the church of Beauchamp St Michael the *Sarum* Use was followed at the Squire's request The effect of that Use was of a most pure and solemn dignity so early English like the lovely carols of the fourteenth century I still remember the voluminous deep chasuble of green which the rector wore at Parish Eucharist so much more priestly than your skimpy fiddle back chasubles of to day

Squire Mortimer was not a humourless person however though one knew that he was amused by an anecdote only from the twinkle in his eyes and the way he

paused and took a pinch of snuff. There was no grotesque exaggeration or forceful epithet in a week of his conversation. Such a method of provoking a smile would have been insufferably vulgar in his library or dining-room.

Indeed, I do not remember him laughing, or laughing myself, in all that week, yet the Squire's conversation always amused or interested me.

I remember him telling, over our evening glass of perry, of his difficulties with the village blacksmith, "a violent, liquorous fellow, that for all his vaunting of atheism is a good man, or I would not permit him to remain in the village. When I persuaded the rector to introduce the Sarum Use I ordered Rankin, the blacksmith, to undertake the hanging of the seven sanctuary lamps before the altar.

"Rankin is incontinent of speech in whatever place he may be, whether in church or in the public-house. Therefore, in order to check Rankin, Miss Cartwright, the rector's daughter, spent a great deal of time with him in the church. I imagine she must have tried to instruct him in the symbolical significance of church ornaments. You know, undoubtedly, that the seven lamps signify the seven churches of the Vision of St John the Divine. That evening, when far gone in his cups at the 'Rose and Crown,' Rankin suddenly delivered a brief but heretical disquisition on the devil. His name was not Satan, according to the blacksmith. 'And I know,' he said, 'for right this very day I have hung up before the Lord God Almighty the seven devils of Asia, and the greatest of 'em is Antioch.'"

And as Squire Mortimer's humour was unforced, his occasions of tragedy—and there were such occasions—were never made too sharply dolorous. I had asked him whether the bounds of his village extended beyond the escarpment we could see from his gunroom.

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "The bourne at the bottom had always been our frontier against Beauchamp

St Mary since the eleventh century But latterly and at some pains I have changed that In this village we still observe the custom of beating the bounds once a year That is we go round the limits of the village and at every traditional landmark we beat or otherwise cause to suffer a boy Squire Mortimer's voice became graver as he spoke He paused awhile before continuing In that way the landmarks are impressed upon the memory of the generation next to ripen Of course we do not beat our boundary boys severely nowadays since the days of ordnance maps it has become a mere ceremony but one whose passing I should regret The bourne I say was always our boundary and we used to jeer at the men of St Mary every year across the pond by Old Weir Mill as we flung in our respective boys But seven years ago our boy was drowned Unknown to me though he had volunteered for the office he was a weakly lad and the cold water was too much for his heart There had been a deal of boys bullying before he had volunteered it became known The following year I bought all of the meadows that lie between two bridges over the bourne, and at the cost of some peremptoriness with my lawyer secured from the county officers their consent to the alteration of the boundaries

Of such anecdotes the history of Beauchamp St Michael was made The sadness of death and the risibility of life were in that village reduced it seemed There was a fine Anglican decorum in everything and I imagined that no note of extravagant colour nor passage of wild poetry could find context there

Two days before I took my departure from the manor my friend and I drove over in the Squire's dog cart to the county town Over lunch at the Yeo Arms Hotel (named after another branch of the family) we heard of the persecution of the Jews in Germany which had broken out that week with fresh violence Upon our return to the village we told Squire Mortimer of this

and from the way he paused in filling his glass with perry I saw that he was moved. The twitch of his lips and a certain hardness in his gaze, that suddenly disappeared, indicated that for this gentleman, whose family had held Beauchamp St Michael certainly since Domesday Book and probably since the tenth century, the hatred of Jews, or of any race as a race, was something impossibly *vulgar*. After dinner he told us the following story. I observed that he was a little inquiet as he began, and suspected he was about to speak of something unkeyed to the plain Matins of our normal discourse.

"No doubt you have seen the empty house which stands at the postbox corner, on the lane which goes from the manor gates to the church avenue." I had seen it, dark and slightly sinister, standing within a half-circle of beeches, whose leaves had destroyed all the grass about them, as beeches always do. "A London family once came to this village and lived in that house for a little more than a year. It had been unoccupied for many years before the arrival of the Goldsmiths, for that was their name.

"They were greeted with a certain courteous hostility by the village because they were foreigners, that is to say, they were not natives of either of the two Beauchamps or of the half-barbarian village of Somerford Parva, our neighbour on the eastern side. The village tradesmen called upon them and reported that they were friendly people, a little too friendly, I remember the baker said, as if they wanted very much to be friends. The village children, who stared somewhat pugnaciously at the young Goldsmiths during the first week, finally left them alone, because they were city children.

"There were six people in the Goldsmith family. The eldest was the grandmother, an aged and white-haired lady of very active body and bright laughter who talked incessantly and indeed scared our taciturn children with excess of words. Her son, Mr Goldsmith, was a quiet

gentleman of unhappy appearance and that was due to his wife's sickness. Mrs. Goldsmith was about forty years of age and very beautiful. Her face was of a perfect olive shape with large brown eyes and lips that once no doubt had been attractively red but now were bloodless and tinged with blue. That she was a very sick woman was plain to see. There was a daughter of about twenty years a lovely creature and a boy and girl of six or seven years.

They were a quiet family though unfortunately they brought an automobile into the village. Squire Mortimer paused awhile and filled our glasses with an apple brandy so excellent that I have not met its equal in Brittany and only once or twice in Massachusetts. I noticed the deliberation with which Squire Mortimer had chosen the un-English word *automobile* instead of *motor car* which the villagers would have used. It exactly expressed his opinion of such vehicles.

Time went by and the Goldsmiths found their place in the village easily enough. Then it began to be whispered that they were Jews. That made no difference to their comfort or to ours, I do not need to tell you. The Goldsmiths were Jews it was said and the fact was sufficiently notable to demand expression but that was all. There is something solemn about the Jews something intense so that the thought of Jewry is a little morbid to our villagers. But that is due to the way in which the Old Testament is read in our churches and to the oppressive manner in which the doctrines of our faith are expounded. Anglican Christians cannot resist the temptation to consider Jews as belonging to a past age and to another and very un-English land. He gazed out over the ploughed fields to the hedge of wild rose and hawthorn beyond which glimmered the White Horse Vale.

If the history of our English Church were properly taught so that we perceived its continuity with the Early Church our mental gaze would be led back without

gaps in our vision to those days, and to that place in which the Jews lived as a people, and we should not find them strange. As it is, the Jews are a people of another place and time, intimate with momentous things, from which we shrink as timorous children do from the solemnities of religion."

Squire Mortimer was seeking to define his own reaction to the Goldsmith family, narrowing his eyes as he spoke, as was his trick when engaged in refining his thought, but I was astonished to note how precisely his words described my own reactions to the Jewish race. I too was brought up in the Anglican Church.

"I think I have defined our feeling correctly," the Squire went on. "Certainly, if anything more hostile existed it never showed itself."

"A tradesman, in speaking to Mr Goldsmith, might say, '*You* like this,' or '*you* do not like that,' placing a light emphasis upon the word, thus disclosing that he thought of them as '*you* people.' Mrs Cartwright called upon the Goldsmiths, but never on Friday evening or Saturday. Mrs Woodward of the Priory at the other end of the village did not offer to sell them tickets for the County Ball, nor does she offer me tickets, by the way. The rector did not ask them for subscriptions to the Organ Fund. But when the annual effort on behalf of the Cottage Hospital was made the Goldsmiths, without ostentation, gave liberally. They were very much esteemed, they were Jews, that was the village attitude towards them. Yet nobody was able to say with certainty that the Goldsmiths were Jews. I knew they were of English nationality, though they had recently been living in Germany."

"In about the fourth month of their living here Mrs Goldsmith became more gravely ill. The husband made frequent visits to London and upon several occasions a doctor returned with him. A nurse came to stay with the Goldsmiths for a while, and afterwards departed."

"Then, one Sunday evening, Mrs Cartwright and

her daughter and myself were walking to Evensong from the manor. They had taken tea here. That lane as you know runs past the Goldsmith house. I was beginning to frame a remark concerning the occupants when a most terrible scream rang out. I had never heard such a scream. It pierced not only my hearing but my imagination also. In that dark avenue in the solemnity of evening and at that corner where the beech trees make a denser gloom the scream which sank with exhaustion into a grieving wail awakened fear in me.

The rector's daughter wished to return and clutched my arm. We were for going on when again wild shrieks came out of the house in the voices of the two youngest children.

Miss Cartwright ran several paces towards the manor and stood trembling. Again the cries now of three persons disturbed the silence. I have never known such a terrible transformation of our village. The trees the light the silence that preceded and followed the cries were all changed. The place became a land of fear and most bitter woe. Please follow me. I said to the rector's wife and opened the gate and hurried up the path. As I did this the little Goldsmith boy ran out of the house in a frenzy of terror and despair. He ran off by the beech trees and flung himself down on the ground and wailed. I saw the rector's daughter hesitate and then she jumped over the ditch and hurried through the avenue of trees and bent over him.

I went into the house. The twenty year old daughter was screaming. It was her screams that became wails at every period of exhaustion. Mrs. Goldsmith was lying on the floor. The daughter at one moment would throw herself down upon her mother and at the next would fling up her arms and tear her hair. Her eyes did not see me. She cried in a language I did not understand a sentence which Mr. Goldsmith weeks later explained to me. She tore her hair and screamed

Vu hast du gegangen mama meine ?

"Where have you gone, mother mine?" she was wailing

"I thrust her aside and the little girl, and tried to lift the mother, but at the first touch I knew she was dead Mrs Cartwright came in, and in the failing light we carried the dead woman to a sofa and covered her with the table-cloth The girl meanwhile clawed at us and at her mother like a wild creature of the brakes

"Before we left the husband returned Miss Cartwright stopped him on the path and told him what she had learned from the little boy. He did not hasten, but came in slowly and quietly, so that I did not hear the door opened, and inclined his head towards his wife's body 'Ah, woe is unto me, woe is unto me,' he whispered and fell upon his knees, beating his forehead. While he was thus mourning the little boy ran back into the house and in his despair began to seize the ornaments of the room and hurl them on the floor Then he rushed headlong to the sofa and flung himself upon his mother, and all of them once more began terribly to cry their grief Rachel, the eldest daughter, thrust her head back and with closed eyes cried again and again, '*Vu hast du gegangen, mama meine?*'

"It was not only that I was shaken by their woe, but I was afraid I had never witnessed such despair, and all the security and the amenity of this village of Beauchamp St Michael had vanished The very external appearances of the trees outside and the slope of the downs seemed to have changed and I was in an alien land wherein the primitive passions of the heart wandered unconfined like terrible beasts Presently Mr Goldsmith stood up, and so stupefied by fear was I that I began to make the sign of the cross, and only remembered that I might offend them when I had already half completed the sign Presently the widower very quietly asked us to leave

"Mrs Cartwright at first wished me to take her home, but when we had gone but a few paces towards

the church and the adjacent rectory she said I think Evensong would steady my nerves

She is a strong minded woman and was already recovering from that experience Her daughter chose to go to the rectory

As we approached the church we heard the choir singing bravely and loudly I cannot find words to describe my relief in hearing that plain cheerful music so characteristic of our Anglican Church Mrs Cartwright felt the same comfort, I know as if a breeze had touched her forehead and restored her sanity We walked in silence through the churchyard gate Suddenly in a moment when the choir was silent she said

Mr Yeo I am not I am not unchristian I hope but why do Jews mourn so savagely? It is horrible, barbaric She shuddered and closed her eyes

Come I said let us go into the church The choir began to sing again and hearing the words I shivered with the suddenness of a new understanding Grief, like a rushing mighty wind swept over me It was not my grief but Grief a force of the hostile universe I stood there even more shaken than I had been in the house of the dead aware of the immensity of time past and time to come and the unassuaged sorrows of countless generations of oppressed and exiled men to whom the scroll of life was ever and still is mourning and lamentation and woe

Mrs Cartwright pulled herself together and with a rueful smile said I suppose it's their custom There listen that is my favourite psalm and I am not in my place in church

We entered as the choir sang lustily, with no grief of the sojourn of a ravished people upon the banks of the rivers of Babylon

As for our harps we hanged them up upon the trees
that are therein,

the baker's voice sang out firmly And I heard the village carpenter strive to out-sing him with

'For they that led us away captive required of us then
a song'

"The sidesman went before me to open the gate of my pew, but I stumbled and almost fell as the choir merrily trolled that awful—yes, awful—poem I knelt there while my villagers blithely chanted, and afterwards I left the church and came here to the manor and called the rector to me

"For weeks the Goldsmiths' sorrow endured In the first week I called at their house and found a son, of whom I had not known, sitting upon the floor, mourning his mother after the prescription of his faith Then Rachel, the twenty-year-old daughter, disappeared from the house one morning and was not found by evening time When I was told, I took my horse, and straightway, impelled by some awakened instinct, rode straight to the pool where our bounds-boy had been drowned There I found her, crouched against a willow tree, in a stupor of grief repeating in her own language, 'Why have you left us behind, mother mine?'

"I tied my horse to a fence and lifted her up She took my arm and I led her back to the village by a lane which avoided her house We passed the baker in the lane, and he stood aside and took off his cap as she passed There was a group of villagers at the manor gate, and these, seeing the girl's face, also stood aside and were silent I took her into my library, and left her there When I returned she was asleep For days afterwards I felt that the library was not my own

"So long as their mourning lasted it seemed that the village was no longer our English Beauchamp St Michael A month or so later they went away for several weeks, and I confess that we were all relieved

"Afterwards, when they returned, I became better acquainted with them, but despite all my efforts I was

never really at ease in their presence I not only sensed how alien I must be to them but I was definitely ashamed At the end of their year of tenancy of the house they took up residence in London Some years ago I called upon them Rachel the daughter was the first to greet me When I put out my hand she took it and pressed her lips against it She had become even more beautiful She reminded me of one of those Madonnas of Botticelli whose faces are filled with a sad presentiment of rejection painted during that late period of the artist's life when he was under the sway of Savonarola thundering from Florence against the terror and iniquity of the Borgia then misgoverning in Rome



The Parents Left Alone

BY T O BEACHCROFT

Tim! Tim! come and open the gate!

Mrs Marshall stepped out of the back door of the farmhouse and looked round the farmyard. There was no sign of Tim. There was no sign of any living thing. It was the iron grey dusk of a March afternoon. A piercing north east wind was blowing straw about the yard and every dog duck hen and sparrow had taken shelter.

Mrs Marshall drew a grey woollen shawl round her neck and shoulders and picked her way across the yard. She was a small wiry grey headed woman. She stooped very slightly from her constant hard work and from her fifty five years but she was still active and her blue eyes were still bright.

She struggled with the heavy gate, lifted it off the latch, propped it wide open with a stone and ran as fast as she could back to the warmth of the house.

At the back door Harry, her eldest son, met her.

You'll catch your death of cold, he said, going out in your slippers. Why ever didn't you let Tim see to the gate?

Tim ain't here, said Mrs Marshall, and you know your father don't like to find that gate shut against his face. It irks him.

They went into the kitchen where a good fire was blazing. Harry sat in a chair by the fire and lit a pipe.

Well, he said, I'd have gone for you if only you'd told me. But I don't see that it'd specially matter if

the gate were left shut for once. You run after Dad too much, to my way of thinking."

He stubbed the burning tobacco down with his middle finger, and spoke deliberately between puffs at the pipe.

"Well, opening the gate's a small thing," said Mrs. Marshall. "You know how he hates to get out and open the gate for himself."

"Yes," said Harry, "I suppose he does specially on market days. It ain't too easy for him then."

"Now, Harry," said his mother, "don't get talking like that. He never takes anything to hurt him, and never has."

"No," said Harry, "just enough to make him market-merry, as they say. He always has come home like it on market days as long as I remember. Only there ain't much merry about it in his case."

Mrs. Marshall looked at her son. He was a big, heavy-moving, quiet fellow of thirty-two. He spoke slowly and seriously, and he always meant what he said.

"Don't you go judging of your father," she said. "I know some of his ways may not be your ways, but you won't get no good out of setting yourself up to judge him. I'm sure of that."

"Well, when I marry Clara," said Harry, "I hope I shall make myself a bit pleasanter to her than Dad is to you."

"Ah, that's what you think now," said Mrs. Marshall. "But politeness ain't everything in a husband."

Harry made no answer. But he smiled to himself in the firelight, and his mother saw that he felt quite sure he was right.

"By the way," he went on, "Martin was in earlier this afternoon in his car, and he said Dad had done famously with those heifers at auction to-day. Top price of the year, he said. I wonder Dad don't get a car himself. It seems a bit out of date to keep on with a trap these days."

Oh well said Mrs Marshall, you can't expect Dad to go changing his ways at his time of life Why there he is I declare—home already Glad I saw to that gate

As she spoke her husband John Marshall clattered in through the gate with Jackie a tall active brown horse in the shafts of the trap At once he filled the yard with angry shouts

Tim! Tim! Tim! he cried Where the hell's that bloody old fool gone to? Ave I got to stand all night hollering for someone to come and take my horse? Hi Tim! Joe! Harry!

Mrs Marshall hurried out into the yard forgetting her shawl altogether

All right Dad she said I'll take Jackie's head for a minute You go in and get to the fire Now, Jackie boy it ain't no good nosing me all over I ain't got no sugar

Mr Marshall half climbed half fell off the trap and stamped about to take the cold and stiffness out of his legs He was a tall lean man his hair was red and he had a red straggling beard, which was tidied up only for family parties and other great occasions His face was almost as red as his beard and out of it across his whiskers shone a pair of cross blue eyes paler blue than his wife's eyes and at the moment rather watery and also rather bloodshot

Where's Tim? said John Marshall Old fool! Only time in the day he might be useful to me off he goes Don't care how long he keeps me waiting it seems Fat lot of good he is to stable a horse, he might just do to put an old broody hen in a coop

Mr Marshall went in at the side door still muttering to himself as he clinked about in the stone passage In a moment Tim came to take the horse Mrs Marshall hurried in after her husband helped him off with his coat and led him into the warmth of the kitchen

What I can't make out he said standing in the

middle of the kitchen, "is where the hell Tim's got to, old fool!"

"I'm sorry," said Mrs Marshall "I sent him down to the dairy to turn those cheeses. they're so heavy for me"

"Just like your mother," said Mr Marshall to Harry. "Whenever I want anything done it's always cheeses—cheeses—cheeses"

"I'm sorry, John, I'm sure. But, you see, you're back early"

Mr Marshall stared her angrily up and down

"Early, am I?" he said "So I've got to be told what time I'm allowed to come back to my own home, have I? And until then I can stand and holler myself hoarse while all you are set here, by the fire."

"Now do you sit down, Dad," said Mrs Marshall, and she urged him gently towards his arm-chair.

He sat down with a grunt. It was now dusk outside, the lamp had not been brought in, and the big kitchen, lighted by the leaping flames of the fire, looked very warm and comfortable

"You sit there and get warm, while Milly makes the tea," said Mrs Marshall "she'll have it ready in five minutes"

"Gawd!" said Mr. Marshall, "what's the woman babbling about *now*? Do you think I'm made of sugar, or something? I never did hear such a lot of fuss about a bit of cold, in all my days. I don't see it's specially cold. Still, I will have my tea right away. Hey, Millie—Millie! *You, Millie!*"

He turned in his chair to a dark-haired girl of sixteen who was laying the table

"You make my tea good and strong. Do you hear me, Millie?"

"Yes, Mr Marshall"

"Well, answer, then, girl, if you hear me"

"Yes, sir," said Millie hastily. "I'm boiling you an egg, too, sir."

Boil your head, said Mr Marshall and hurry up

Yes sir said Millie Hard or soft?

Mr Marshall turned in his chair and glared at Millie
She was new -she was small dark pretty and vivacious
He snorted loudly

None of your cheek here my girl he said If
you sauce me I ll bundle you out of my house in double
quick time and box your ears too Ask your mistress
if I didn t send young Daisy what s er name back home
crying to her mother

Milly fell silent at this and for a few moments no one
spoke Peace fell on the kitchen Presently Milly
handed Mr Marshall a large cup of tea Ah he said
with relish She had made it strong and piping hot
just as he liked it He sighed and stretched out his
gaitered legs to the fire A few minutes later Mrs
Marshall set the lamp on to the table and he drew up his
chair to enjoy the comfortable meal that was set before
him boiled egg cold bacon bread and butter and
home made gooseberry jam and plenty of hot strong
tea

Well Dad said Harry at length How did the
heifers go?

Rotten said Mr Marshall pushing his chair back
Not worth the labour of driving em in it wasn t
Might just as well send em to the kennels that I might
I ve known the day Harry boy when I could get four
times the price for good beasts like they or pretty near
Well perhaps not *four* times Still I suppose we mustn t
grumble at anything these days

Mrs Marshall nodded and glanced at Harry and smiled
They were good beasts too she said What
price did you get John?

Ah that s tellings that s tellings said her husband
' Them as don t ask questions don t get told no lies
He laughed loudly at his joke

All right said Mrs Marshall Keep the news
to yourself I only asked

"Only asked," said Mr. Marshall. "Listen to that, Harry, my boy, I like that, I do" He laughed again, and began to fill his pipe

"All right," said Mrs Marshall "You go on laughing, if you think it's so funny I'm going down to pack up some eggs Shall I send Millie in to clear away?"

Mr Marshall nodded "Send her in," he said He went to his chair by the fire and blew clouds of smoke from his pipe He watched Millie as she took the tea-things away. She tried to escape his notice as much as possible, but whatever she did, and wherever she went, he followed her with his eyes

When Millie had gone out and closed the door behind her he turned to Harry, and said

"I like that little Millie."

Harry looked at him in surprise

"Of course," said Mr Marshall, "she's a pert little piece, like they all are lately Nobody never gives 'em a good larrupin' nowadays. That's the new clever idea"

He took some puffs at his pipe and kicked the logs in the grate, sending a fountain of golden sparks up the chimney Harry watched him.

"But I like that little Millie, all the same," he went on "That little kid's got something to her She's got a little go and gumption I like the way she goes at her work She'll make some man a rattling good wife one day Take my word for it."

Harry coughed, then he said

"You may be right, Dad, but she's what I'd call a bit flighty, even for a kid not my sort, anyhow"

"Well," said Marshall, "what's wrong with that? I like 'em young and pretty always have done A man's a man, ain't he? But mind you, Harry no offence to you and your Clara. Your intended is a fine young woman as ever I see When I first watched her at them dairy demonstrations, at the show, I knew you'd picked a good wife there, Harry, my boy"

Harry smiled to himself His Clara was not smart and pretty and pert but she was sensible and strong and thirty and when he had first shown her to his father at the butter making demonstrations his heart had been full of love and pride He pictured her now in her white coat, her strong clever arms her clear voice her sensible explanations

Besides which his father went on apart from your Clara you're marrying with a good decent family Harry I don't know of a chap I've got greater regard for than her father The Turners are decent farming stock Harry same as you and me They've farmed land in these parts for hundreds of years and old Turner's taken firsts in the dairy shows ever since I remember

Mr Marshall nodded thoughtfully at his son

I must be off said Harry I'm meeting Clara to night

Off you go said Mr Marshall I shall do a bit of shut eye Your sweethearting'll be over soon Harry You've fixed it for April haven't you?

Yes Dad—six weeks time from to day But why say that's the *end* of my sweethearting Why shouldn't we be sweethearts after we're married?

Mr Marshall began to laugh loudly but he saw his son's eyes fixed so solemnly on his face that he stopped his laugh and got up and laid a hand on Harry's shoulder

Well it do put an end to it he said and it don't You see Harry 'tis like this—I've been married thirty three years——

But he was cut short by Millie who came into the room and said

Please Mr Marshall I've made up a big fire in the parlour It will be more comfortable for you there sir

Oh will it? said Mr Marshall Well I don't think so Miss Pert See that Harry she wants me out of the kitchen Just you buzz off Millie

He flung a new log on to the fire sat down and rested

his long legs on the basket of fuel. "Good-bye, Harry. I'd like the place to myself now, and if anyone comes, Millie, you say I'm dead"

She went

"Hey, Millie," he called after her "Tell your mistress I want to speak to her in here"

"She's down in the cellar, sir, packing the eggs"

"Don't you argue with me," he said, half rising from his chair "If you give me one more back answer, it'll be the order of the boot, see? Now do what I told you quick"

She ran off

"Eggs!" he shouted after her. "Whenever I want anything it's always eggs—eggs—eggs."

Millie went along the stone-flagged passage, and peered down the steep, dark cellar steps. She was rather frightened by Mr Marshall. She felt half inclined to giggle all by herself in the dark at the top of the stairs. She could see dim candle-light somewhere below.

"Missis!" she called gently after a while, "Missis!"

"Yes, Millie," came up Mrs Marshall's voice

"Master wants to speak to you"

There was a pause, in which Millie knew that Mrs Marshall was straightening her back

"Tell him I'm just doing the eggs," said the voice

"Please," said Millie, "I told him that"

"All right," said Mrs Marshall, "I'm coming. Bother these steps—they're that steep and slippery"

She came up slowly

"It'll be a funny day when I fall down these steps along of three or four egg-boxes," she said "I thought I might as well bring some up"

"Let me take them," said Millie "I'm sorry—but he made me call you up"

"Well, it won't hurt me, coming up once extr'y. Put the eggs in the back kitchen, Millie my dear, carefully, mind"

Then Mrs Marshall went to the kitchen door and

opened it gently She looked in and it was just as she expected Dad was already fast asleep His hands hung loosely over the arms of the chair his bearded chin drooped on his chest his long legs sprawled out across the hearth and his old liver and white spaniel lay stretched at his feet Both dog and man were snoring and grunting as they slept The fire blazed and crackled beside them

Mrs Marshall looked at him and smiled

That's nice she said closed the door gently and saw Harry putting on his coat and muffler in the hall

Seems to get pretty heavy after market doesn't he?
said Harry

It isn't only market Harry he was up half the night with that mare

Well so was I up with her said Harry Besides she foaled two days ago

Well you're young said Mrs Marshall Don't you be so judging Harry

Judging? said Harry in an injured voice I'm not judging I haven't said anything

No but you go thinking things I won't have you judging your Dad It ain't for you to judge him

Harry did up his muffler and patted his mother's arm

I only see what I see he said So long Mum

It was Harry Marshall's wedding day The April sun had come out brightly lighting up colours indoors and out of doors that the eye had forgotten since last summer There had been blossoms in the hedges as they drove along and flowers in the long grass of the country churchyard

Mrs Marshall was dressed in a new dark blue silk dress with a white lace collar and a blue straw hat with two white flowers in it Her blue eyes shone Her cheeks were pink with excitement She seemed to have become years younger only she still kept her slight

stoop, and her hands looked gnarled and brown against the blue silk dress

Already she had seen Harry and Clara made man and wife. She had kissed them both in the vestry. Now in the Turners' farm-house there was a confusion of loud voices, of jokes, of laughing faces. Everybody was talking to everybody else, and all the Turner family wanted to single her out for a few words.

Then, with Mr. Turner directing them, they took their places at the big table spread with a white cloth—sixteen or eighteen of the Marshalls and the Turners. On the table itself were jellies, bowls of fruit, jugs of cream, biscuits, cakes, and in the middle a large old-fashioned silver epergne.

At the sideboard Mr. Turner, large and red-faced, whittled away at a new ham, delved into a huge pie, cut off whole wings and breasts of chicken, and pressed on his guests the best of everything that the Turners' farm, dairy, and kitchen could supply.

"Some more ham, Marshall, our own curing, of course"—"Mrs. Marshall, *you* can't refuse my wife's extra special best—pass up your plate, please"—"Now, mother, I'm going to open the champagne"

"Pop" went half a dozen corks, and the bottles came round. There was no shortage. Mrs. Marshall, from her end of the table at her host's right hand, saw her husband's glass filled up a second and a third time. His red beard was neatly pointed, his hair brushed. He wore a dark grey suit with a white collar and white silk tie. He had a white flower in his buttonhole. He looked quite distinguished, and was soon cracking jokes at a high speed with all around him, particularly with his younger son Martin. Together they had the table in roars of laughter.

Mrs. Marshall felt quite proud of him. He and Martin were the quick-witted ones of the whole party. Martin knew just how to play up to his father. Soon John Marshall got the ear of the entire table, and told an

anecdote which ended in a storm of laughter from every man and woman

Turner thumped the table

The best I've heard in ten years Marshall he said

You always could tell a story Now ye've earned another glass of bubbly for that I swear ye have

Then there were more jokes more stories speeches Throughout it all Harry beamed but was quiet and steady as ever Then the party left the table some of them went into the parlour some stayed in the dining room some went outside into the pale April sunshine

Hullo old un said Harry finding his mother alone for a minute Enjoying yourself?

I'm very happy she said All the Turners tripping over themselves to make a fuss of me

So they ought said Harry You're the most important person here I say Dad's going hot and strong I hope you don't pay for it afterwards

Find the girls Harry said his mother I want to hear all about Lucy's new baby

So the afternoon passed away in a happy whirl Almost before she could believe it Mrs Marshall found herself waving at the gate as the car whisked her Harry and Mrs Turner's Clara away together Some of the younger ones ran after the car shouting She waved and waved even after the car was no more than a noise Then she realised she was alone at the gate

So it was over she thought All over Her eldest boy had gone from her just as the others had gone before him Only it was different this time because he had been the last to go and the first to come In a way it was the end—the end of something that had begun many many years ago What would it seem like at home with out any of them?

Well said Mrs Turner seeing her standing alone at the gate You'll get chilly standing there It's clouding over I declare everyone's gone in but us two mothers

"Ah, Mrs Turner," said Mrs Marshall "My eyes are full but not with trouble I'm happy, really."

Mrs Turner put her arm round her, and slowly they walked back.

"It is a wrench," she said, "when it actually comes to it, and Harry's your last I know how you must feel"

"You've all been so kind," said Mrs Marshall "I mustn't be silly and feel like crying I should feel thankful to think Harry's got such a splendid wife, and Clara's got a good man in Harry, too, if I may say so."

"You may say that, my dear We all feel that"

"Oh, well," said Mrs Marshall, half laughing, half crying "A tear from their own mothers won't do them no harm It's natural"

She stood with Mrs Turner at the doorway of the house, and for a few moments she lost herself in a wave of feelings and memories, holding Mrs Turner's hand the old far-away years pressed about her with dream-like faces and whispering voices, the lost faces of her children with flaxen hair, when they were three or four years old, and then at her wedding, the loved face of her own mother, who died so soon afterwards, then the ardent face of her husband when he was young—and different each face called to her from the past Gradually she heard the chatter of voices again in the Turners' house, and the voice of her own younger son Martin speaking cheerfully in her ear

"Through with the water-works, Mum," said Martin "I never saw you crying when I left home"

"Now, now," said Mrs Turner "Don't you be making game of your mother, Martin Marshall I'm sure you men don't know how good she is"

"Well, Mrs Turner," said Martin, "she's the best mother I ever had I'll allow that But what I was going to say, Mum, is Dad wants to be off—and I've got Jackie all harnessed up in the trap for him."

"Oh, don't go yet," said Mrs Turner

"Mum, you mustn't go yet," said her daughter Lucy,

flinging her arms round her and kissing her loudly
I've hardly seen you

I'd love to stay but Dad's right I expect Why
there he is at the door I declare

The whole party now clustered to see the bridegroom's
parents go Mr Marshall sat stiff and ready with the
reins in his hand Jackie did not stand too well and
both driver and horse showed signs of impatience as the
good byes were said

Mr Turner helped Mrs Marshall up and tucked her
rug round her saying as he did so Your traps over
high for a lady Marshall It's time you bought a little
car

My wife would sooner drive behind a horse than in
them rattling things said John Marshall shortly
Wouldn't you mother?

Well I don't know but what I *wouldn't* like a car
she said thoughtfully It would be quicker

Let me take you home in my car said Martin

However Mr Marshall jerked the reins Jackie glad
to go started off briskly The wheels crunched on the
gravel and they swung out of the gate The good
byes died away behind them and they were alone
together with the brisk clop clop of Jackie's hooves and
the hedges rolling by

Mrs Marshall settled herself into the rug and gave a
sigh Well she said afterwards I'm sure it went
off ever so well

Her husband made no answer She waited a little
and began again

The Turners were that kind and nice to me I felt
like a queen

There was still no answer He sat very stiff and up
right in deathly silence

Oh dear thought Mrs Marshall Whatever
have I done to upset him this time? It's all been so
jolly up to now

So they went on in silence The ribbon of road slipped

on and on underneath the wheels The long-legged Jackie, with his ears well forward, strode out at his best pace, then slowed down to a walk to take the last hill on the homeward journey. The evening grew very still, and Mrs Marshall found her husband's ill humour weighing on her like a black cloud

"Oh, John," she broke out at last, "what is the matter, my dear I'm sure I don't know what I've said "

"Matter?" he said in a tone of bitter grievance "you know well enough Whatever did you want to go shaming me for in front of all those people?"

"Shaming you? What *are* you talking about?"

"Saying my old trap wasn't good enough, and you'd prefer to have a car, trying to take advantage of me, I suppose, just because you was so cocked up by that old Turner "

Mrs Marshall frowned and bit her lip

"Now, why should you take things so ill, John? I couldn't help but agree that a car goes quicker than a trap So it does, doesn't it?"

Mr Marshall pulled Jackie to a sudden stop, and he made a noise like a savage dog about to begin a fight

"Out you get, then," he said "I won't drive you If my horse and trap ain't good enough, you wait for your precious son Martin to come, and drive you into the ditch, I daresay "

"Don't be so daft, John drive on "

"You get out of my trap "

Jackie shifted about uneasily He had topped the hill now, and he was all for breaking into a brisk trot John Marshall held him back firmly

"Get out," he said

"A nice sort of silly I should look, sitting under the hedge waiting for a lift That *would* be showing you up Now drive on, do "

She put out her hand and gave his arm a slight squeeze He shook off her hand, as if it had been a scorpion Jackie felt the shake on the reins, and off he went

Stand Jackie roared Mr Marshall reining him up again

Now you get out and walk Stand Jackie stand!

He lost his temper with the horse and gave him a cut with the whip Jackie at once leapt forward almost at a canter this time Mr Marshall stood up in the trap like a Roman charioteer and jerked Jackie's mouth back hard almost falling out of the trap as he did so

Now mind John mind said his wife anxiously holding on to the side rail

'Get out!' shouted Mr Marshall Stand Jackie Damn your eyes!

He lashed Jackie with his whip and Jackie dashed off again

Christ what ails the horse? bellowed Marshall

I'll give him a good hiding in half a minute

Again he stood up and pulled Jackie back so suddenly that he himself fell forward heavily on the splashboard of the trap dropping the reins on the ground Jackie always rather irritable danced about in the road and began to kick backwards

At that moment a large car with a piercing hooter rushed up behind them It filled the evening air with a sudden ear splitting noise as it went by Jackie kicked out at the trap as if trying to get rid of it and set off at a gallop

Mrs Marshall clung to the handrail Mr Marshall yelling frightful oaths at Jackie picked himself off the floor of the trap and found the reins were trailing along the ground

'Now see what you've done' he shouted

Jackie continued at a gallop It was downhill now and he put out his head and went fast His hooves made a mad clatter on the road As they tore along Mr Marshall leant over the splashboard groping to pick the reins off Jackie's back

Oh take care John! said Mrs Marshall her heart beating in her throat

The trap swayed from side to side. Mr Marshall lurched, grabbed, caught at the reins, fell off the trap, and disappeared under the horse's legs. The trap slewed round, one wheel went up the bank, and then it stopped with a jerk. Mrs Marshall, with a sickening dread inside her, looked round for her husband.

At once she saw him get up from under the trap and dust off his coat vigorously.

"Oh, John," she cried out, and burst into tears. "I thought you'd been killed," she sobbed, "I thought you'd been killed."

"Don't be so silly," he said, and climbed back into the trap. "Not the first time I've been out of a trap, mother. I ain't that brittle. Let's get along. You'll feel better directly."

Ten minutes later they were safely in their own farmyard. John Marshall handed the horse over to Tim, but he said nothing about their misadventure.

Mrs Marshall went into the kitchen and sat down. The house was quite empty, as Millie had gone over to the Turners to help.

"Oh, I do feel queer!" she said. "You gave me such a turn, John."

"Well, sit quiet," said John.

She heard him moving about the kitchen, but she felt too dizzy to do anything but sit and rest with closed eyes.

When she opened her eyes again, she found he was bringing the lamp and the table was laid.

"Why," she said. "You've got the tea!"

He poured her out a cup and brought it over to the fireside.

"There you are," he said. "There you are."

She sipped it gratefully.

"John, you've cut sandwiches, and everything," she said.

"Of course. Now what about a nip of whisky in your tea? That'll set you right."

"I don't think so. I feel better now."

They sat for some time in silence then John drew his chair near hers and leant forward

I've been thinking he said in a quiet unusual voice I've been thinking It ain't going to be so bad really now the children have gone We must take things a bit more quietly I can't run the whole of this place without Harry I thought of renting all those upper fields with the wood I know a chap as'll pay a good price

His wife nodded

Then there's the dairy he said I want to get in a good strong girl to do it for you and she can help in the house too

I can manage John I always have done

Yes he said But now we've got to look forward to getting older We've got to go slower We don't need to strive so hard We've had our run That's how I look at it It's been a longish time too Do you remember our sweetheart days?

Oh John she said and nodded

He took her hand

Do you remember when Harry was a little baby? Do you remember saying to me at his christening party Now things is really starting?

Yes John I remember plain as plain

Life's been pretty full since then he said It's never been quite the same as those first two years But things are going to get slower again now It'll be just us two again us two alone less to do—more time with each other

He stopped Then suddenly he let go of her hand and stood up and jerked out brusquely

Do you think you can stand me? P'raps I ain't been too bad in some ways

Oh John she said clasping his hand tightly I do love you so All these years together I do love you so I don't say you deserve it but I do love you

The Fine Line

BY MARIAN MINUS

CADIE CULKY's slight childish figure in the middle of the dusty South Carolina bent forward dejectedly, as if with each new step her knees would give way. The sun was half over the horizon, and the dusty road was thick with others who, like Cadie, were returning home after a long day at the mill. But Cadie walked alone. It was more than late-adolescent stubbornness that caused her refusal of their companionship. At sixteen she was contemptuous of her kind, and through them, by reflection, saw nothing for her future except weary acceptance of everything that seemed to lead, in the shorter or longer run, to defeat. Some long-forgotten time ago, she reasoned, her fellows on the road had wanted the answers to all the things she had come to question now, but that time was past and sunk in dreary resignation.

Cadie turned from the road to a gate in front of a small house. She stood there, her hand half on the latch, taking in the picture of her home. The sprawling, unpainted boards followed no pattern to form the house. Beside it was a sere garden patch, burnt by the hard beat of the steady sun, and at the garden's end was a pile of crumbling bricks which had lain there rotting for as long as she could remember. Across her vision, movement against the stillness of decay, ran the younger Culkeys, her brothers and sisters. Their bare feet scraped against the sun-baked earth. Cadie saw their sallow faces. She wanted to stay outside the gate forever.

C

The touch of her hand on the rusty latch made the thin man on the porch look up from the stick he was whittling. Lem Culkey was a confident consumptive regularly denying the possession of normal strength in his cadaverous body and living consistently by his conviction that he had fulfilled his mission in life when he gave his wife Lucy five dirty children. He dropped his eyes before Cadie's intense stare. Tobacco juice slid to the tip of his overhanging upper lip and hung there in glistening globules.

Come on up an set, Cadie, he said, breaking the bubbles on his lip and wiping the wetness on his knee.

Cadie stared at him, her slowly moving feet stopping altogether on the way from gate to porch. Lem looked down at the stick in his hand.

Don't know what I'll whitt out next, he told her confidentially. Your ma don't want no more canle sticks. She don't want no more lil pretties t' hold th' salt in. He looked up and went on mournfully.

Says she got more'n she got any use for now.

Y'oughta get up off your behind an go to work! Cadie's voice shook.

Lem looked at her in surprise. You know I ain't fitten t' do no work, he protested mildly. I'm glad th' young uns ain't got no idea o' my weakness. He looked at the children playing in the yard. An by Gawd I don't want nobody tellin' 'em their pa ain't fitten f' labour, he concluded belligerently.

What difference it make? Cadie asked him.

Knowin' or not knowin' won't make no difference soon's they big enough t' work in th' mill.

Lem broke the second set of bubbles which had formed on his lip. He slapped his wet hand on his knee.

You been actin' mighty funny, Cadie, these las' few days, he accused her. Ain't no call f' you t' carry on like you been doin'.

No call, cept I'm tired takin' care of a lazy ol' man.

a ol' woman an' four young 'uns! I'm tired a-coughin' out my gizzard in that dam' mill an' havin' niggers call me 'Cottonhead' "

"You ain't aimin' t' listen t' what niggers say, is you, Cadie?" Lem was grieved "You don't care 'bout nigger talk."

"Nigger talk or not," Cadie snapped, "I *am* a cottonhead, an' I ain't no better off'n they are Fact, some of 'em live in better houses 'n this ol' shack! "

"Cadie," Lem rebuked her, "y' know that ain't true Ain't no cause t' worry Time's comin' when niggers won't have nothin' a'tall "

"Yeah, an' cottonheads like us goin' have nothin' a'tall right 'long with 'em-" Cadie spat after the fashion of her father "Ain't got nothin' now," she muttered

"Th' Good Book says——"

"Don't you come tellin' me ag'in what th' Good Book says!" Her voice rose "You ain't got nothin' t' do 'cept set here an' recollect what th' Good Book says If y' got up an' did some work, you'd hafta put your mind on what's so now. Th' Good Book don't say nothin' 'bout cottonheads, does it? It don't say nothin' 'bout a house full of dirty li'l brats runnin' 'round half naked, does it? What's it say 'bout a poor ol' woman wearin' herself out havin' dirty brats an' tryin' t' keep 'em from starvin' on th' four dollars I make a week? What's th' Good Book say 'bout all that? "

Cadie took a step towards the porch Her voice was shrill, and people stared from the sidewalk as they passed Lem had been straining forward in his chair Now he sank back, sighing

"You sure got a powerful way o' talkin', Cadie," he said in admiration He was about to continue when he saw the fierce look sharpen on her face "Th' Good Book don't say nothin' 'bout what you ast," he admitted hastily "It jus' gives comfort t' folks like

us' bout th niggers He leaned back and closed his eyes

You ol fool Cadie gasped You ol ignorant fool!

She ran up to the porch and across it to the door avoiding by habit the weak places in the boards Lem heard her cursing and sobbing beyond the door

She oughten t git upset like that he said softly to himself It ain t fitten for a long life

Cadie ran into the small room which she shared with the sister nearest her age She slid down on the bed coughing and cursing The bed was hard and unyielding to the uncontrollable shaking of her body Cadie fought its hard resistance as she fought the urgent gnawing in her throat and the pain in her chest

Lucy Culkey came to the threshold wiping her greasy fingers on a ragged gingham apron She pushed a loop of hair out of her eyes

Hear d you carryin on Cadie she said wearily Ain t no need She stepped across to the bed and put her work heavy floury hot hand on Cadie s damp brow Ain t no need she repeated

Cadie tried to speak but a new spasm of coughing overcame her She began to sob and tears streamed from her eyes while her throat opened convulsively against all efforts of her will for silence Lucy ran from the room She had seen Cadie like this before

'Reely! she screamed from the back of the house

Reely git me a pail o fresh water from th well'

A high childish voice drifted back to her in answer She turned and saw Cadie stumbling towards her holding both hands hard against her flat chest

It s all right ma she said weakly It ain t so bad this time

Lucy put her arm around Cadie s waist and led her into the kitchen She brushed off a chair with her apron

Set down Cadie she said You set here an res an drink a dipper o fresh water

She left Cadie and went to the door. "You, Reely!" she screamed.

Cadie's hands went from her chest to her ears

"Reely! Bring that water in this minute!" Lucy turned back to Cadie "Them young 'uns outdo my soul" She jerked open the oven door and let it fall noisily on its loose hinges "Don't you fret," she continued "Reely'll be here in a minute" She snapped the oven door upwards, slamming it hard so the latch would catch

"Aw, ma," Cadie groaned "Th' noise, th' noise"

Reely, a dirt-scratched boy of nine, burst open the screen door and thumped the pail of water on the floor

"Git!" Lucy dismissed him She pulled a dipper down from the wall and filled it, then sloshed half its contents over Cadie's head and face She handed her the rest, murmuring, "Drink it down slow It'll do y' a heap o' good"

Cadie felt the water run through the tight places in her throat, and once she coughed, her face full in the dipper Then the water settled in her stomach, cold and shocking to her fevered body.

"Feels like I got a lake inside me," she said She stood up and hung the dipper back on the wall

Lucy began to take pans from the top of the stove and from the oven Cadie offered to help, but her mother, in one of her rare tender moods, made her sit down again.

"Set by th' air long as y' can," she said.

She brought out a pan of well-baked bones lying in a pool of grease and poured a pot of greens into a cracked bowl

"I know y' like spare-ribs an' musta'd salat," she said, looking at Cadie

Cadie nodded her head in painful agreement

"An' hot hoecake" Lucy shook the pale white disc out of a heat-blackened pan

Suddenly the water seemed to bubble in Cadie's stomach. A flush of heat and the sight of the food sent her sick and stumbling to the door.

Wish I had some milk, she said when the spasm had passed. My stomach don't feel so good.

Lucy stared at her in amazement. Y know we ain't had no milk in over a year, she said. That's a pretty notion f' you t' be havin'! She pushed past Cadie out of the door.

You Reely! You Meggs! All you young uns! Come on in t' your supper. Cadie been home near bout a hour. She wants somethin' hot in er belly! She came back into the kitchen, pausing just inside the door to add from ritual rather than necessity. An git your pa!

I ain't hungry ma, Cadie said unexpectedly and hurried from the room before her mother could speak.

Lem had come quickly in response to Lucy's call. Cadie almost fell over him as she fled the kitchen.

Y comin' back t' eat ain't you Cadie? he asked in surprise.

She went past him without answering. Out on the front porch she heard the clash of knives on forks in the kitchen. Once in awhile she could hear Lem sucking a spare rib dry. She moved away from the sounds to the bottom step.

Twilight settled into night and the moon came up Red, the way it often is in summer in the hot South.

Cadie's solitary regard of the moon was broken by the younger Culkeys who came tearing around the side of the house from the back yard. Then Lem came out and sat on the edge of the porch, his legs dangling towards the ground.

Y shoulda took some nourishment, he greeted her reproachfully. It ain't good t' work all day an go t' bed on a empty stummick. Y oughta take care o' yourse'f. Might hafta lose a day. He coughed deprecatingly.

"I didn't want all that hot grease inside o' me," Cadie told him

Lucy, coming from the house, snorted, her tenderness past

"She wanted milk," she said, settling in a creaking wicker rocker

"Yeah," Cadie sighed "A glass o' col' milk woulda made me feel good It woulda kep' my stum-mick from cuttin' up" Her voice trailed away in confusion She seldom revealed her desires to her family

"'For ever' one that useth milk is unskilful in th' word o' righteousness, f' he is a babe,'" Lem quoted

"I don't wanta hear nothin' out o' th' Good Book to-night," Cadie told him fiercely "An' maybe I am a baby I'm only sixteen, an' I'm doin' what you oughta be doin' I'm takin' care o' seven folks" Her voice grew old as she repeated, "An' I'm only sixteen"

"Your pa's sick," Lucy reminded her from the darkness

"I'm sick, too," Cadie cried, jumping up from the step The moonlight fell on her pale hair, bleached by the long hours in the textile mill, and it looked more than ever like cotton

"Set down, Cadie, set down," Lucy told her before she could speak again

Cadie sat on the step again, but she was not silent "Workin' all day in that mill—I'm too young t' be coughin' fit t' die" Her voice choked, and she dropped her head in her hands

"A woman's made t' be strong," Lucy told her "A woman's burden ain't easy"

"Well, I ain't a woman yet!" Cadie raised her head "I'm only sixteen." Pointing a quivering finger at Lem, she said, "What about a man? Ain't he suppose' t' be strong?" She stopped to cough "He ain't," she went on, still pointing to her father. "Ain't a manly bone in his body."

Lucy began to hum a hymn. She was tired of the everlasting fight between Cadie and Lem. She felt sorry for the girl but there was no denying Lem's consumption. She wasn't sure about Cadie's. Anyway she couldn't go out and work herself. Thirty cents a day wasn't worth it since the young ones had to be looked after. The mumbled melody of the hymn drifted outward to the edge of the porch. Lem heard it and added his deep voice.

Over the sound of this Cadie heard another song. Walking in the middle of the road before the house a Negro boy was singing

*Boy Oh boy th moon am red
Dis ain no night t go t bed—*

Cadie looked up at the moon. Round now it was still red.

Th moon sure is red she said agreeing with the figure already out of sight.

Lem and Lucy stopped their humming. What you say Cadie? they asked in chorus.

I said th moon sure is red.

Lem spat a stream of tobacco juice at a firefly that was winking on the ground at his feet. Lucy rocked on in the creaking chair and the young Culkeys played noisily in the yard.

Don't you go repeatin nigger talk. Lem said finally wiping the back of his hand against the side of his thigh.

That's all y ever done f us pa, Cadie said angrily.

Talk. Don't do this-an so cause niggers do it. Don't say this an so cause niggers say it. She paused for breath and to keep the coughs from spilling out.

Niggers or not I bet th men help take care o their families.

Your pa's sick Cadie. Lucy said sharply not breaking the rhythmic rocking of her chair.

All at once sitting there was more than Cadie could

bear She jumped up, cursed weakly, and walked from the yard

"Guess th' gal's got growin'-pains," Lem said complacently When Lucy did not answer, he spat at another firefly.

Cadie went down the dusty stretch of road The heat had not disappeared with the sun's sinking, and the moon, red as it was, seemed to make it hotter. She looked at it often as she walked Her dragging feet stirred the dust, and soon it was in her nose and in the throat She began to cough Shaken and weak, she stepped over a narrow rut to the unpaved sidewalk and leaned against an unpainted fence which enclosed an unpainted house Straightening up, she saw a blur of dark bushes beside the house

"Figs," she said to herself Without thinking, she knew she wanted a handful They would be cool now that the sun was down She wished that she could get inside the yard unnoticed Voices came from the porch, but she could not see the faces, and by sound alone she could not tell whether Negroes or whites spoke At that moment, fatigue turned to hunger, and it did not matter who owned the leafy little trees

She went to the gate and unlatched it Hesitantly, she walked to the steps, then stopped The faces a little above her on the porch were black

"What you want?" The question came from the man Cadie almost knew' that he wanted to add, "white gal" His voice was suspicious, and she could hear the woman murmuring

"I wanted t' pick two-three figs," Cadie said in a rush

The man and woman held a whispered conversation "Go pick 'em" It was the woman who finally spoke

Without a word, Cadie ran to the side of the house The first fig she pulled, wrenching it from the tree, was hot in her hand The sticky milk, torn out where she

had parted fruit from twig ran over her fingers She felt the fig lying heavy in her hand and in the moon light she could see the thick white fluid where it smeared her finger tips

The woman came towards her Cadie forgot the sticky smear on her hand and snatched the hot pulpy fruit from the tree She would take them home and put them in cold well water until they cooled The woman touched the figs exploringly Cadie saw the dark fingers pressed lightly against the fruit

These ain't fit to eat the woman said Too hot Th sun's been mighty hot an it don't mean us poor humans to forget it She laughed and took her fingers from the fig Come on in the house she said I got some in the ice box

She started walking away but Cadie made no effort to follow She stared after the woman muttering Ice box She's got a ice box The woman looked back and called to Cadie to follow

Cadie ran a few steps and reached her side Without a glance at the man on the porch she trailed after the woman through the little house to the kitchen Now she could see that the woman was young Somehow Cadie had thought she'd be older than she was It might have been memory of Lem's lament young niggers ain't polite to white folks like the old uns was

The woman opened the door of a battered wooden ice box

Ain't much to look at she said but it don't leak an it ain't hard to keep clean

Cadie peeped over her shoulder and saw a jar of milk blue white through the blue glass of the jar It looked cold Cadie's desire for cold milk to lie like a lake in her stomach as the water had returned

Milk she said in a low voice

The woman stared at her puzzled Then her eyes went to Cadie's hands

Oh she said That old fig milk sure is nasty

when it gets a holt o' your hands " She hurried off to soak a towel in water for Cadie to wipe her fingers

The figs which the woman took from the ice-box were firm and full inside their rich, dark skins They were cold and almost black on the white plate.

"Take a handful," the woman said

Cadie took two, then three, and, after a quick glance at the woman, she took two more. The plate was almost empty, and in the realisation of this, hunger retreated before shame. She laid one back on the plate, but the woman shook her head in mild protest and put the plate down on the table.

"Ain't y' had nothin' t' eat?" she asked

"Yeah" Cadie couldn't tell this Negro woman of her hunger Lem always said no matter how bad off white folks got, niggers were worse off still, and lower in God's eyes "Yeah, I had a good supper"

The woman looked at the pale hair, the thin face, and the flat body

"Don't look like you had too many good suppers" She laughed companionably, sharing the unrecounted inadequacies of the past

Cadie's face flushed, and the fig in her throat stuck there without warning She began to cough Her breath was short and she gasped and gagged The woman slapped her on the back, tried to get her to drink water, and finally, in fright, called her husband.

The man came in He stood just inside the door, his brows knit in suspicion and concern

"Told y' to let this white gal go on 'bout 'er business," he complained to his wife

The woman made a brisk motion for him to be silent, and wrung out a towel in which she put a piece of ice. She wrapped the towel around Cadie's head

"She got a coughin' spell all of a sudden," she told her husband

In the man's eyes was an urgent appeal to Cadie to leave

"Must be nice havin' ice," Cadie said as soon as she could speak. The cold towel felt good against her head. She wanted to talk to stay where ice could be pressed to her throbbing temples.

"Nice nough," the woman said, "but it costs a lot. It's kinda 'spensive f' poor folks."

Cadie looked around the room. The stove was newer than the one her mother had. Clean curtains hung at the window. And, there was the ice box.

"You ain't really poor, are you?" she asked. "Don't look much like it," she added, looking around the room again.

Then she was silent. She did not hear the woman's amused denial or the man's bitter grunt. She was thinking about Lem. She wondered if he had failed to do his best within the limits of the poverty of his kind because he had known it would be insufficient and if, in knowing the very knowledge had driven him to further defeat.

She ain't listenin' to a word we sayin'. The woman's observation cut through Cadie's thoughts. She smiled a little.

"Where y' live?" The man addressed his first words to her.

Recalling Lem's admonitions about treating Negroes as equals, Cadie could not tell them—she could not tell niggers—where she lived. She knew painfully what Negroes thought of the cottonheads who worked in the mills and lived in Mill Town. She named a street on the other side of town, away from the little houses all built alike on streets that looked alike.

She could see the Negroes looking at each other in disbelief. She wished that she hadn't made the neighbourhood such a good one.

"If y' live over there," the man said sceptically, "guess y' jus' makin' fun of us when y' said we wasn't poor." He waited for her to speak. When she didn't, he asked, "What your pa do?"

"Where y' been?" Lucy asked simultaneously. She didn't stop rocking.

"Yeah, I'm back" Cadie went up the steps and into the house.

"Lem," Lucy said a few minutes later, "y' hear Cadie coughin'?" She waited 'until he spoke before she set the chair in motion again.

"Yeah," he answered. "She's coughin' hard."

He spat on the ground, towards a pale yellow light. The light went out, and Lucy rocked in her chair.

Pelican, St James's Park

BY R N CURREY

This lank untidy intellectual browed
Knobble kneed awkward bird
With his absent minded glance
Of remote benevolence
Is a country clergyman

His piety wears the same
Loose angularity of frame
His grave quiet presence
And ascetic bony features
Show quality of breeding
His sedentary scholar's fitches
His solitary wading
Through philosophies and brooding
Eyes astride the long beak
Stretched over his book
Showing as his glance passes

He keeps a fountain pen
Beneath a wing
And let me tell you another thing
Those trousers from which pond water drips
Bear the indentations of his cycle-clips

Teresa

BY SÉAN O'FAOLÁIN

1

THE dank beechwoods on the convent side of the station caught the first cloud of steam as the train chugged outwards. Looking back, from the turn beyond the signal, Sister Teresa saw that frail whiteness torn by the branches, and at once those branches began to tear at her heart. It had always been so, ever since the first day that she had looked up from the convent avenue when she heard the train, and saw the torn steam. It suggested warmth, comfort, friends travelling together. To-day, in the train herself, travelling in comfort with a friend, she was moved for a different reason.

"Sister Patrick," she whispered to the old nun opposite her. "I feel lonely already."

The nun laid a hand on her knee, to comfort her. Teresa bowed her head even lower, moved by the gentle touch.

"Yerrah, come now," tapped the old nun more sharply, "you were eager enough to be on the road, you know. I saw you! Looking at maps for weeks and weeks!"

"Only, Sister Patrick," murmured the novice, "because I wasn't well."

The old nun gave her a long look, started to say something, and then turned to the sunlit downs wheeling by.

"God bless it," she said cheerfully. "We'll have a smooth crossing anyway."

"Sister," cried Teresa, "I wish I never came!"

Thrash of nonsense comforted the nun We re
off and let s make the best of it We ll be putting a bit of
spit an polish on our French Slowly she enunciated
in an appalling accent

Est ce que cest que vous etes confortABLE?
Oui? ou non?

I don t know why I ever thought I wasn t happy at
Saint Anthony s confided the novice

As you say yourself child tis only because you weren t
feeling up to the mark Leave us say a rosary for your
vocation The Saint will grant it to you But you must
pray for it Sitot dit sitot fait! —she rounded off
triumphantly lifting her beads Ah how well I
remember the page that s on in Henri Bue! And it s
fifty years since I learned it

Going into a strange country considered the novice
Among strange people Oh dear oh dear she
sighed I wish it was over

Well if you can t pray child think of the saint!
Think of the saint

And the old nun let her beads fall into her lap and gave
herself up to the delight of the passing countryside

But Teresa could only think of her dream of last night
that she was back at home in Dublin in the fields birds
nesting with her brother so that even when she tried
hard to turn her mind to Saint Thérèse her mind kept
wandering to her home and her people

Saint Thérèse she murmured enviously lived
near her own people Her father and mother lived in
Lisieux

Old Patrick made no reply She nodded like one who
has heard it all before Besides she was eating choco
lates

Of course I know she was ill too agreed Teresa
and added with a flash that made her whole face beauti
ful If only my people could visit me!

Of course they will said Patrick absently

But tis so far! All the way from Dublin to Kent?

E (P 8)

They'd only come about once every three years Even if Jim would come! "

In his lieutenant's uniform . . . And talk to her about the way they used to go searching for the birds' nests. All the nuns hopping around him, loading him with agnus deis, and holy medals . . . But she would stand aside, humbly—as the saint would have done—and let them have him. And when he would be going away she would stand on top of the steps beside Mother Mary Mell, offering up her sorrow to God And Mell would put her arm around her, like mother to daughter Jim would take away that picture with him, and if God willed, keep it in the battlefields, the picture of a little saint. Then, if he were wounded, badly but not seriously, and not in the face—say in the arm or the leg—he would think of that happy moment, while he waited for the stretcher-bearers He would write to her from the hospital to tell her so His letter would be read aloud in the common-room . . .

Patrick glanced up at her, and she was so astonished at the transformation that she kept looking at her—the tiny face glowing, the big eyes glittering She could not help laying her palm on the novice's hand, and Teresa, looking up, smiled (because the old woman was eating chocolates again), and holding the wrinkled hand was comforted

All the way to the boat she kept murmuring to herself over and over, "Omnipotent God, please make little Teresa a saint like Thérèse! " So that, once, when Patrick, reverting to the purpose of their pilgrimage, said, "I'll pray all the way that you'll be confirmed in your vocation," Teresa smiled to think that anybody could doubt her, to think that she had ever doubted herself Even in all the noise and bustle of the port she kept her dream of her future life Even in the hurry and scurry of the boat, where the mid-Easter crowds seemed so foolish and so worldly, wandering restlessly to and fro, looking for those better places that travellers always

think about and never find she was at peace. She prayed until she was exhausted. She got a racking headache from the heat and the bad air but she still kept on praying. Even when Patrick abandoned her to go on deck and see the foreign town emerge like a mirage from the misted sea, Teresa did not stir. She did not care if they all left her. She would not have stirred if the boat had gone down. Though she did picture Sister Patrick clinging to a raft and being picked up by a passing ship and saying when they revived her, 'Our Teresa prayed to the very end!'

2

So on the platform at Dieppe at a corner so near the sea and boat as to be part of the quay there stood presently this small nun flanked by three shapeless bags of that old fashioned kind known as portmanteaux. Now and again the old nun came hobbling up to her from the busier end of the platform muttering something that drew a shadow across the lovely face and then hobbling away again head down to this official and that official wavering around like a top as each one hurriedly threw a few words at her and rushed past. At last the old nun came back to the novice complaining again but finished with her two hands out in appeal. Teresa followed by the old nun walked straight down to the first official she saw and said in clear English

Where is the train for Rouen?

The official glanced at her then smiled then bowed and said politely indeed with deference

There it is mademoiselle and pointed to it

Mais non non babbled the old nun *Pas aller a Rouen! Aller a Leesoo!*

Listen Sister Patrick begged the novice with dogged patience. I know the route backwards. It's Dieppe Rouen Elbeuf St Aubin Serquigny and then Lisieux. This is the train

The guard confirmed this, as far as concerned Rouen So they clambered in at the last moment, but the old woman was still crying, in squeals of fright, that they would never get to "Leesoo," that they would find themselves landed in Paris in the middle of the night, that she had told Mother Mary Mell not to send her, that thirty-one years is too long out of a country for anyone to remember the language, and so on and so on, while the younger nun gazed wide-eyed out of the window at the passing fields

"Our pilgrimage has begun," she said at last, in a dreamy voice, almost to herself

"Will ye have egg and ciess, or tomato?" asked the old woman, too intent on her own appetite to take notice of anything else "We earned it," she laughed, with a happy look about her and a countrywoman's smile and nod to an old Clemençeau in the corner, who just dug a chunk of his roll off with his penknife, wiped the back of his hand right and left across his moustaches, and with an idle glance at her opened both mouth and eyes simultaneously to devour the chunk

The nuns began to nibble their food with ascetic delicacy Two hens could not have pecked more nimbly or neatly Their travelling-companion finished his lunch almost before they had well begun He carefully stowed away his bottle, produced a long cheroot, and began to fill the carriage with pungent smoke Then, to the dismay of the novice, he leaned across and closed the window tightly By the time she had finished eating she had already begun to lean her aching head on her palm In minute imitation of the Frenchman the old woman rubbed her moustaches and her beard clean of crumbs, leaned back, closed her eyes, began to eat chocolates and to breathe through her nose She woke with a start to hear Teresa say to the Frenchman

"*C'est assez chaud, monsieur? Avou la bonté d'ouvrir la fenêtre*"

The old tiger-face glared, growled, tapped his chest

fiercely poured out a flood of uncompromising French and leaned back. His sideward glare thereafter was like a cat ready to pounce.

'My head,' groaned Teresa. 'I've such a headache.'

'Offer it up, girl,' advised the old woman. 'Offer it up to Saint Teresa for the success of your intention.'

'I've offered it up on the boat the whole way over,' retorted the novice.

'Tis a cross,' said the old woman easily. 'Tis put on you by Saint Teresa to try you. Suffer it for her sake.'

The girl looked at her coldly. Then she observed that they had a second travelling companion. He was a cavalry officer who with more consideration than

Clemenceau was walking up and down in the corridor to smoke his pipe. Each time he passed the door he glanced up at his luggage on the rack. She raised her eyes appealingly the next time he passed. He paused, glanced at her, was about to pass on, and paused again to look. A tiny gesture of her hand, a lift of her chin, a widening of her eyes held him. He came in, sat down, looked around him, and stared at her admiringly.

Monsieur, she begged. *J'ai mal à la tête. La fenêtre. Pouvons ouvrir?*

With pleasure, he said in English, stalked over to it and slapped it down.

A raucous argument started up at once between the officer and his fellow countryman. Sister Patrick sat up, glared at her charge, and drew herself in from the combatants. The argument ended with the abrupt flight of the old man, cursing as he went, a laugh from the officer, and a frightened smile from the novice, accompanied by a glance at her chaperone who, in the greatest suspicion of the officer, had lowered her head to look crookedly at him, like a duck, out under her coif. He was stroking his little line of moustache and smiling at Teresa. When Patrick slewed full around to survey her charge, Teresa had her eyes cast down demurely on her clasped hands.

Presently the officer got up, and went out to smoke another pipe. Every time he passed he bowed in to the two nuns. Teresa never looked higher than his knees. When he had passed for about the sixth time, Patrick said

"Sister, do you realise that officer is bowing to us every two minits?"

"He is very kind," said the little nun. "Everybody is very kind," she sighed, and began to pray on her beads.

But when he passed again, and bowed, the old nun said crossly

"I believe you're looking at him, Sister Teresa!"

Teresa shook her head sadly and looked out of her big, innocent eyes at her chaperone.

"It is sad," she said. "He will be killed in the wars," and her eyes swam with tears.

"And what's that to you?" whispered the old nun angrily.

"He reminds me of my brother, Jim, in the army," said Teresa. "He will be killed on the battlefield too. Oh, let us pray for the pair of them."

The old nun could not refuse to do this, so they prayed together, and when the officer passed, and bowed, and smiled, the two nuns bowed and smiled back, and went on with their prayers for the repose of his soul when he would be killed in the wars.

. 3

He was useful at Rouen. He bought them two lovely cartons of café-au-lait, with buttered rolls, and showed them where the auto-rail would start. Then for the last time he bowed, and smiled, and went away, and they never saw him again.

It was the fading hour of day before their little auto-rail came and took the two travellers (and about eight others) trotting out of Rouen. A light haze of rain began to float down through the air. They passed a village

deep in trees where the first lights were beginning to contest the supremacy of the day. Soon the rain shone in rivulets on the lighted windows of the auto. The other travellers leaned closer together and chattered in loud voices as if to keep the night at bay.

I wonder murmured Teresa what are they doing now back in Saint Anthony's?

Ah yes! sighed the old nun wearily. It makes England seem very far away to think of Saint Anthony's now.

And Dublin? smiled the novice sadly.

Ha! said the old nun with a yawn that dropped the subject into vacancy. Her Irish youth and her Irish friends were too few and too remote for serious reflection.

I know what my sisters are doing now in Dublin whispered Teresa. Having tea and making plans for the night.

Sssh! Tutut! chided the old nun she had begun to eat more chocolates and did not want to talk.

It's all right for you complained the novice.

You're going to meet your aunt. I'll know nobody in Lisieux. And if I find out there that I have no vocation what'll I do?

And even if I have an aunt. Ha! I suppose she won't know me.

to Teresa's amusement Patrick leaned over and said comfortably.

A terror for the hot milk at night. She'd drink two pints of it. Sure 'twas enough to kill a plough horse.

She gave a whinnying cackle of delight and leaned back nodding. From that on she kept on letting occasional little gasps of laughter escape her. It was as if somebody tickled her every three minutes. Teresa sighed heavily.

The old woman nodded, and smiled, and murmured, "Two pints" Then, after a protracted giggle out of each side of her mouth, she seemed to go off into a beatific sleep, for a broad smile never left her face until they stopped abruptly in Lisieux

4

Lisieux burst on the two pilgrims with an unexpected blaze of light It shone through the rain like a prismatic waterfall As they left the station and emerged on the great square, Teresa cried in delight.

"But it's really a big place!"

She saw a green neon light flitting through the wet dark over a hotel door She saw a *vis-à-vis* crawling across the Place, and it made the town seem both cosy and intimate, and at the same time enormous and important But Patrick had flown into a hurry and scurry, fumbling with her umbrella, and clutching her bags, and gazing all around her in a new rush of timidity, so that the two, in this conflict of absorption, nearly lost one another in the crush This flustered the old woman so much that she nearly choked when the novice said

"Oh, Sister Patrick! Couldn't we have one cup of tea in a restaurant before we go to the Hostel?"

"Wh-a-at?" cried Patrick, hunching up her shoulders, and laying her hand on her guimp like a stage Frenchwoman "*Mon pethite, que dites-vous? Du thè? Vous savez bien Vous savez bien que nous* . *Il faut*

. *Il faut* ." She groaned furiously "I can't talk French I told Mother Mary Mell . Are you talking about tea? Do you realise, miss, that you're on a pilgrimage? Sister! The rain down on us! And we goshtering in the middle of the street! Hurry! Child! Hurry!"

Under their two black umbrellas they were like two ants with top-heavy loads Suddenly Teresa stopped She sneezed resolutely, once twice . .

four times Patrick towered over her. She started to gibber at her like a baboon.

You're after getting a cold on me! That's yourself and your window and your fine officer! Teresa sneezed a fifth time. Are you sure, demanded Patrick, that you have the double petticoat?

The novice was not heeding her. Her big eyes were directed miserably into a confectioner's window. It was bright with the brightest cakes.

Dear Sister Patrick! she wheedled. Don't you think we could have one small, tiny little cup of tea?

The nun opened her mouth to say No, looked at the window, looked at Teresa and said:

Well! Since you have a cold coming on you, I'll let you have just one hot cup of coffee. Just one, mind you!

It was warm in the café. They had coffee and cakes. Over their heads a radio kept weaving waltzes that made the novice sway gently on her chair. Old Patrick had two éclairs. The novice made her coffee last as long as possible. Patrick had a third éclair. Then the respite was over. In spite of a fleck of cream on her jaw, Patrick's face was unusually forbidding as she looked up and said:

Well, miss, I hope you're feeling better now?

Thank you very much, Sister, said Teresa, and rose with an air of firm resignation. We must go to the Hostel.

A bell rang eight o'clock as they emerged. They wasted ten minutes searching for the Hostel, a bald-faced place rising plumb from the pavement. Its brass-tipped reed woven half-screens were damply inhospitable. Its closed door and iron grille were shining with the rain. The lay sister who drew the slide of the grille spoke in unintelligible provincial French of which they understood only one word: *Impossible!*

Quoi? squawked Patrick, clawing the grille as the slide shot to in her face. What did that wan say?

The bell jangled down the hall again. This time the lay-sister was even more emphatic, and therefore even less intelligible, and she became still less intelligible as Patrick hung to the grille and blustered herself into equally unintelligible Franco-English. Teresa firmly pushed her aside and said, with a calm sanity

"Vous ne comprenez pas. Tout est bien arrangé. Notre mère a écrit une lettre à votre mère."

The lay-sister interrupted. She said, "*Trop tard*." She said, "*Huit heures.*" She said these words several times. She closed the grille with the slowness of a curiosity that commented on the folly of the two foolish virgins who had come too late. Teresa turned to Patrick, and burst into peals of laughter at the look of horror on her face.

"We're too late!" she cried, joyously. "Now we must go to a hotel!"

Patrick rent her

"That's you and your tea. I didn't want it. You did it deliberately. Wait until we get back to Mother Mary Mell, and I'll tell her you're not fit to be a nun. You're a little flutthermouse. You're a gillygoosey. What a pilgrim we have in you! There's your answer for you. You're not *fit* to be a nun! You're a slip. You're a miss."

Teresa had begun to cry, standing stiffly, staring miserably. Patrick at once hushed her tirade, unfurled her umbrella (it was as big as a bookmaker's), dragged up two of the bags and set off, in a mouth-buttoned fury, to find a hotel. The rain was now a downpour. Their bags weighted them down. She halted. She gave the girl a look that was worse than a blow, shoved her into a doorway, and said, "Don't stir from there till I come back." She left the bags in her care, and butted out into the rain.

Men kept approaching the door, and seeing the nun, they would stop dead, and push away. At first this merely frightened her for she did not realise her predica-

ment but suddenly a cistern flushed noisily behind her she recognised that she was standing in the doorway of a public *cabinet* Clutching her bags she fled down the street down a side street down another side street and halted panting under a café awning The old proprietor came out and looked at her cocked his head to one side bowed considered her smiled said that it was a bad night and wiped his indifference on to the table top Then he gazed around him looked at her again shrugged and went indoors More men passed her on their way in or out always pausing after the first glance to smile and bow Twice she got up to fly wondered whether Patrick would ever find her and then sat again on the damp iron chair A drunken old man with a beard finally put her to flight by taking off his hat leaning on the table top and starting a flowery speech She ran right into the arms of a gendarme who was accompanying Sister Patrick down the street Patrick threw her two hands up to the sky preparatory to a tornado of abuse She was soaked her guimp was a rag her coif hung around her face like lace Before she could speak Teresa hurled herself on the old woman's breast and sobbed out all her awful adventures so that the gendarme and the nun calmed her only with difficulty They took her bag then and led her still whimpering to the little pension pub that Patrick had chosen for the night's lodging There Patrick put her into bed in a cosy little room all to herself with red stuff curtains and a dusty looking carpet—it was really merely thread bare—and with her own two hands Patrick lit a fire brought an omelette rolls and coffee and tucked her in for the night and all the time Patrick kept begging her pardon for that outburst at the hostel What with the comfort the kindness the vestigial excitement the little novice was melted to tears of happiness

Our pilgrimage is really only beginning she whispered happily to Patrick Isn't it dear Sister Patrick?

"'Twill begin in the morning," temporised Patrick
"And then the saint will smoothen everything out"

Right cheek touched right cheek, and left cheek touched left cheek, in the way of all nuns kissing. Old fingers laid out her glossy black hair on the pillow. The light went out. A rough palm smoothened her forehead. The door clicked. The flames gently flickered on the ceiling. In Kent, at Saint Anthony's, the only sound around the convent at night had been the crackle of twigs in the damp wood, the hoo-hoo of an owl. Here she heard footsteps in the street below, an occasional motor-car swishing over the wet cobbles, the soft, whispering downfall of the April rain. Looking up at the wavering glow on the ceiling, she attended to those sounds, whose tumult, and whose unfamiliarity, and whose suggestiveness made England and her convent, Dublin and her home, utterly remote—less part of another country than part of another life. More than anything else they said, "The pilgrimage has begun!" They said, "Thérèse, your patroness, is lying out there, somewhere, in her coffin, silent amid all these noises." They said, "O dear Saint Thérèse, I will leave all things in thy hands." But her mind was not on Thérèse. She saw, instead, a picture of the handsome cavalry officer, clear as daylight, bowing and smiling and saying good-bye at Rouen. She said, "O most omnipotent God, I yield all the world to Thee," and heard the train from Rouen rattling towards Paris. She fell asleep, smiling like a child.

5

Only the hens were awake as they walked to first Mass at Saint Pierre through the little sleeping Norman town. The sun was glittering in the water between the cobblestones. Teresa felt that even the warm prophecy of the steam rising from the streets and the cloudless pallor of the sky seemed not something general to everybody in

the town but particular to her life alone. She said to Patrick: 'Thérèse is calling me! I can hear her!' Patrick nodded too excited to speak.

After breakfast the two pilgrims began the ritual of Lisieux. Teresa was enraptured to find that Les Buissonnets, the Martin home (Saint Thérèse Martin) was exactly as she had foreseen it from photos and descriptions in biographies of the saint. She saw the trim lawn in front of the house and the useful kitchen garden at the back. From the attic windows there was the expected distant view over the plain. She said to Patrick with a sigh of happiness:

Ah, yes! It was all made for her. If I had lived here I too would have been a saint!

Patrick nodded in agreement with the general proposition—that for saints all things are ordained, nothing fortuitous. For the novice to say that she too could have been a saint was merely for the old nun a way of saying that God had chosen one and could as easily have chosen another.

'Tis Heaven! she murmured and clasped Teresa's hand.

—Then they saw all the child saint's toys—tiny statues and chalices and a ciborium as big as a daisy.

Ah! sighed Teresa again. When I played at being a nun at home in Dublin my sisters only made a mock of me.

It was the same in the sacristy of the Carmelite convent where the saint's hair lay strewn under glass in its reliquary and the walls were covered by mementoes of those who had paid honour to her memory—decorations, orders, swords, letters from all over the world.

The folly of the world! murmured Teresa, sighing again. They honour her now. They did not know the sorrow of her heart while she was alive.

A foolish world it is! agreed the old nun. Then she clasped the girl's hand warmly and said fervently:

Ah! You see it at last? Mother Mary Mell was wise.

to send you to Lisieux ” And the two touched cheek to cheek again

A Carmelite lay-sister next led them to the grave of the saint. From that they would go on to the convent proper to meet Patrick's aunt They began to palpitate in mutual sympathy. The grave calmed them by its simplicity When they rose, the aunt stood beside them Patrick toddled to her with cries of joy The aged woman, her head a mere skull, her hands bony and ridged, gave no sign of human recognition other than to say, “ God bless you, my child ” Old Patrick drew back like a frightened child Timidly she introduced the novice She explained falteringly why they had come

“ She's not sure if she wants to be a nun, Mother.”

The Carmelite looked at the novice, and she, too, at once drew back from this worn victim But the Carmelite smiled to hear the English name, Teresa, and took her hand gently and led her (Patrick following) across the garden to the convent ante-room On the way she talked of simple things like the budding shrubs and the blessing of the rain They sat in the ante-room and the Carmelite rang a bell

Suddenly a faint passage of light in one wall drew their eyes to the grille—the last portal of the inner Carmelite hermitage Behind the grille was a gauze, and presently Teresa's frightened eyes made out, behind the gauze, a still face from which the gauze had eroded all recognisable character All she could see was the vaguest outline of a countenance She realised, in that second, how the discipline of the Order must have likewise eroded from the little girl of Les Buissonets all human emotion, and in a flash of understanding knew what sacrifice really means, that the contentment of Les Buissonets had made the final sacrifice not easier but far more difficult, that to love the world and to desire to love God means endless torment, and all self-deception, all untruth, as well as all desire or hope to escape the truth fell from her She flung herself at the Carmelite's knees and cried out hysterically.

Ma mere! I have no vocation! '

Patrick intervened hurriedly

Pay no heed to her She s upset and sick in herself
The child doesn t know what she wants

The aged Carmelite waved her aside and lifted the
novice to her feet Looking into her face with a clear
eye she said after a frightening silence

Could you be a Carmelite?

No! no! cried the novice and she again drew
back as if she were at that moment about to be im-
prisoned behind the veiled grille

If you cannot be a Carmelite my child you can be
nothing

She d be happy enough intervened Patrick in an
easier Order

She will be happy—we will all be happy—only in
Heaven said the Carmelite coldly Could you not
even try to be a Carmelite? asked the aged woman of
the young girl

No! begged the novice No! I couldn t do
it!

Why not?

I d always be shut in Wouldn t I? trembled the
girl

It is an enclosed Order agreed the Superioress
calmly

I couldn t stand it!

How do you know? catechised the Superioress

For answer the girl burst into such a sobbing wail that
Patrick drew her to her broad bosom She turned
furiously on her aunt

Ye have no heart! she upbraided Badgering
the poor child! Tisn t that we expected from you!
Don t heed her she comforted Teresa My poor
little girsha don t mind her Sure we can t all be saints
You ll do your best You can t do more

But sobbed Teresa I want to be a saint Tis
to to to be a saint I joined the nuns Her

voice came out through her nose, miserably "If I can't be a saint, I don't *want* to be a nun!"

"Hush! hush!"

The old woman comforted her, and finally restored her to a whimpering silence. Looking up, they saw they were alone. The grille was closed. The veil was hidden. The Superioress had gone, silent as a ghost. The two pilgrims went back to their pension. That afternoon, without discussion, they went on to Saint Malo, where the novice was expected to find bodily rest, as at Lisieux she had been expected to find calm of soul.

6

Saint Malo, as they found, faces across a wide estuary the modern watering-place of Dinard. At night they could see the lights in the hotels and cafés, and all around the roof of the casino, and sometimes they heard across the still surface of water, the sound of music. Steamers from Southampton and the Channel Islands floated in the bay at anchor. Patrick was charmed with her room in the convent where they stayed. It looked directly across at Dinard. She wrote to Mother Mary Mell that she had a "grand-stand", and that she was thinking of going across in a row-boat some night to gamble in the Casino and make the fortune of the Order. Becoming serious in a postscript, she said that Teresa had not yet made up her mind, but that she was behaving with the greatest devotion.

That was true. Not only did the novice attend every service in the convent, but she had become pious beyond description, daily spending long hours alone in adoration in the chapel. But Patrick then noticed that she left her lunch untouched on her table on the third day of her arrival, and as this worried her, she went up to the novice's cell to ask if it was wise. There she made a discovery. She found that the mattress and bedclothes had been rolled up and put away under the bed. She

found all the girl's red flannel underclothing hanging in her cupboard At once she went down to the chapel and hissed at the solitary worshipper to come out beckoning madly with one bony finger

Sister Teresa she said severely I see that you are refusing your food Is there any reason for this?

The novice hung her head and said nothing

Answer me Sister

Still the novice kept her eyes on the parquet and made no reply

I command you Sister to answer me

No Sister There is no reason whispered the novice

Then eat up your food in future ordered the nun

Do you want to make a skeleton out of yourself?

And she added more easily Don't you know right well I'm supposed to bring you home as plump as a duck?

The novice raised two large sad eyes

Sister Patrick she begged I will obey if you command me But I want to do penance for my sins and for the sins of the world I feel I have received a higher command

What higher command? blustered the old woman taken aback What on earth are you talking about Sister?

Teresa sighed

The sins of the world are all about us she smiled sadly I see them every night from my window across the water in the dens and gambling houses All lit up like the fires of Hell to lure poor souls astray I dreamed the first night I came here that the Devil lives over there I saw that this convent was put here specially to atone for the wickedness that surrounds it

Holy Mother! cried the nun What are you talking about girl? What what Sister Teresa let me tell you that if you ate a proper supper And by the same token miss no wonder you have dreams if you sleep on the laths of the bed Do you she threatened sleep on the laths of the bed?

The novice once more hung her head, and once more she had to be bullied into replying

"I do, Sister," she confessed unhappily

"Well, then, let there be an end of it! What right have you to be going on with these andrewmartins off of your own bat? You know right well you must ask permission of your superior before you do the like And that reminds me," she cried, grabbing the girl's flank, and then standing back from her in horror, with her gummy mouth open "You haven't a stitch on you! Go upstairs at once, miss, and dress yourself properly I'll be after you in two minutes I'm worn out and tormented with your vagaries! Ten times I told Mother Mary Mell . . ."

She pointed upstairs—a figure of Justice

The novice went, tearful, head-hanging In two minutes the old nun followed. She opened the door of the cell The girl lay on the ground, white naked, her arms stretched out like a crucifix, her dilated eyes fixed as on a vision over her head The old nun entered the room, closed the door, and thundered

"Get up out o' that!"

The novice did not move

"Miss!" said the old woman, pale as a sheet now, "how dare you disobey me!"

The novice trembled a shade, as if a ghostly wind had ruffled her spirit With her heart battering inside in her, Patrick walked over and looked down The big brown eyes, so strikingly dark in that pale pink-and-white face, stared up past her Patrick looked up at the ceiling, and was relieved to see only the electric-light bulb She looked down again She looked all about her The thick-moted afternoon sun slanted in across the bed A hissing suspiration below the window was followed by the little groan of the gravel dragging back under the wave Then she saw a slimy brown insect, with wavering head, creep towards the white ear of the novice, and she screamed

An earwig! Climbing into your ear!

Teresa sat up as if she was stung The fright passed
The two looked at each other with hate in their eyes
Patrick turned away At the door she said
Put on your clothes I'll wait in the garden

In complete silence they walked four miles that afternoon They did the same the following morning That was their last full day On the final afternoon they walked out again and on the way back Patrick spoke

We will be back at Saint Anthony's to-morrow night
Do you know yet my dear if you have a vocation?

I have decided to join the Carmelites said the novice

They halted They looked across the sea wall into the dusty blue of distant Dinard A few lights were already springing up over there—the first dots in the long golden night time necklet that they already had come to know so well A lone seagull squawked over the glassy water The sunset behind the blue pinnacles of the resort was russet

And what's wrong with our own Order Sister dear?
asked Patrick of the vacancy before her

I feel dear Sister Patrick judged the novice staring ahead of her that it is too worldly

How is it too worldly? asked Patrick in a whisper

Well dear Sister Patrick pronounced the novice

I see for example that you all eat too much

The little wavelets fell almost inaudibly drunken with the fullness of the tide exhausted and soothed by their own completion

I shall tell Mother Mary Mell that you think so
whispered the old nun

There is no need dear Sister It will be my duty to tell her myself I will pray for you all when I am in the Carmelites I love you all You are all kind and generous But dear Sister I feel that very few nuns really have the right vocation to be nuns Patrick

closed her eyes tightly The novice continued "I will mortify my body," she whispered "I will surrender myself to the divine Love. The death I desire is the death of Love The death of the Cross."

They heard only the baby-tongues of the waves The evening star blazed golden before them in the deepening blueness of the sky. The old nun saw it, and she said, in part a statement, in part a prayer, in part a retort

"Sweet Star of the Sea!"

Teresa raised her dark eyes to the star and she intoned in her girlish voice the poem of Saint Thérèse —

"Come, Mother, once again,
Who camest first to chide
Come once again, but then
To smile—at eventide"

The old nun fiddled with her beads She drew long breaths through her nose She tried several times to speak, but could not She gestured that they must go back They turned and walked slowly back to the convent, the old nun and the young novice, side by side, the old nun as restless as if she were in bodily agony, the novice as sedate and calm as a statue After a while Patrick fumbled in her pocket, and found a chocolate, and popped it into her mouth Then she stopped chewing, and threw a frightened eye at her companion At the look of intense sorrow in the face beside her, she hunched up her shoulders and as silently as she could, she gulped the fragments whole

On the journey homeward they did not speak one word to each other. all the way to Rouen in the trotting auto-rail, in the clanking train to Dieppe, on the boat, in the English train In silence they arrived at Saint Anthony's, among the dank beechwoods, in time to hear the first hoo-hoo of the owl, and to troop in with the rest of the community for evening chapel Mother Mary Mell barely had time to ask the old nun how she had enjoyed her holiday—that first real holiday in thirty-

one years Patrick's eyes fluttered for a second She recalled the golden lights of Dinard and she said

It was lovely Mother!

Mary Mell caught the flicker of hesitation Just as they crossed the tessellated threshold of the chapel she whispered quickly And Teresa?

Patrick who had been waiting for that question ever since the final afternoon in St Malo and yet had no answer ready took refuge behind the chapel's interdiction of silence She smiled reassuringly nodded smiled nodded again and then very solemn and pious she walked in with her head down She said her prayers badly She slept hardly at all that night She heard every crackling branch and fluttering night bird For what in the name of the Most High was she to say to Mary Mell and what was she to say to the community in the morning? As she tossed and tumbled she thought of Teresa sleeping peacefully in her cell and the old woman burst into tears of bitter hate

7

In the morning there was no Teresa She had left the convent through a ground floor window before anybody was awake and gone on the milk train to London She had walked across the city at that hour when the sun emphasises the position of the East End and the sleepers in the Parks that she traversed were unwrapping their newspaper blankets A sister in law coming out to collect the morning post found her sitting on the door step She had breakfast in a tennis frock along with the family

She saw the convent only once again—when she brought her husband to see it about two years later As they got out of the train she looked up into the familiar beeches at the steam of the engine caught in the leaves and branches and she told him how every train used to make the woods seem infinitely lonely and the convent

darker and more melancholy, because that white steam suggested warmth elsewhere, and people travelling, and the luxury of the world she had renounced. Her George, who was a Protestant, and who was very much excited by this expedition, nodded solemnly, and began to get an uncomfortable feeling that he was married to a nun. They were entertained politely, but old Sister Patrick did not appear. As they left, the starting train again sent its gushes of steam into the branches, and now those branches seemed, to Teresa, to clutch not only at the white smoke but at her own troubled heart. She felt that the woods enclosed a calm refuge from this world of which she had, irrevocably, become a part, and as she snuggled down into her fur collar, she gazed mysteriously out of her big eyes at her husband, and said, with a grave shaking of her little head

“Ah, George! George! You will never know what I gave up to marry you!”

He smiled adoringly at her as, in obedience to a gesture, he leaned over to put a cigarette between her rouged lips.

“My precious Teresa,” he murmured softly, and patted her knee.

Contributors

KAY AMBROSE started taking art seriously with a scholarship at Reading University. Upon leaving she went to London to make a fortune but earned her living as a cook for the first three months. Studied and loved ballet long before she saw a performance the first one being in 1935. Was televised drawing the Russian Ballet in action at Alexandra Palace in 1938. Has had exhibitions of dancers in action at Sadlers Wells Theatre Leicester Galleries Cambridge University and Sydney Australia. has illustrated books on various subjects including two Pelican Specials *Ballet* and *Opera*

RALPH BATES was born in Swindon in 1899. He has been many years in Spain and for some time worked as a dock labourer in Barcelona. He fought in the Spanish Civil War on the Government side. He has written six books, two novels, three books of short stories and a biography of Schubert.

T O BEACHCROFT was a contributor to *Penguin Parade* 6 which contains a biographical note.

R N CURREY was born in South Africa in 1907. A biographical note is included in *Penguin Parade* 4.

GEOFFREY GODWIN says: I am one of a family of five. I never liked school and when I was sixteen my father let me do what I had always wished to do—go to sea. As my sight is not good I could not go either into the R N or Mercantile Marine so I signed on as a deck boy and crossed the Atlantic in the winter of 1937. In 1938 I went to Bear Island aboard a Hull trawler and broadcast that experience with the cod fleet. For the last year I have been cruising

with Commander Lightoller, D S C , on the M Y *Sundowner* I have now joined the Air Force and am waiting to be absorbed. My first short story was published by Reginald Arkell in *Men Only* "

ERIK JOYSMITH was born at Watford in 1907, the son of a doctor. He was educated at Aldenham School, but left school early to attend Watford Art School. Finding poster work more attractive than the exhibition painting, he became apprenticed to a practising commercial artist, and subsequently found employment in several commercial studios in London. He is also interested in photography technique and possibilities, and has had jobs both in commercial and film photography. Most of his leisure has been spent in small-boat sailing, and he has cruised most of the English Channel and French coast, usually alone. He started writing about a year ago, and this is his first story to be published.

MARY MILNE was born in 1914, and educated at St Mary's Hall, Brighton. She then studied at the Brighton School of Art, won a travelling scholarship and went on a bicycle tour in Germany, from which, she says, she came back with many impressions and ideas but very poor sketches. She has taught at a school in Essex, exhibited at the Academy and is now married to a doctor with a practice near Harrogate. She gives as her list of interests art, engraving, embroidery, fishing, and—since the war started—cooking and hens and Red Cross nursing.

MARIAN MINUS was born in America a few months before the last war. "My formal education began," she tells us, "in South Carolina, and ended after two years of graduate work in social anthropology at the University of Chicago. After a year of divided allegiance, during which I was co-editor (for one issue) of a quarterly literary magazine, *New Challenge*, I chose writing in preference to an academic career."

SÉÁN O'FAOLÁIN was born in 1900. Began career as a teacher and University lecturer. Left teaching to write. Short stories first published in *Irish Statesman* and *The Dial*.

and in America in *The Hound and Horn* Two volumes of his collected short stories *Midsummer Night Madness* and *A Purse of Coppers* have been issued by Jonathan Cape who is publishing a third collection which will include the story contained in *Penguin Parade* 8 He has also written two novels two biographies a play and a book of verse translations from the Old Irish A new novel *Come Back to Erin* and a travel book *An Irish Journey* illustrated by Paul Henry R H A are due for publication during 1940 He is a founder member of the Irish Academy of Letters lives outside Dublin and devotes all his time to writing

CRICHTON PORTEOUS was born in Leeds Started work in Manchester with a well to do uncle whose business it was intended that he should take over But the cotton trade did not suit him When he was eighteen he cycled into Cheshire and got a job as farm labourer Eventually he became head teamsman only there was not enough money in it so that at nights he tried to write managed to sell a few articles and eventually got work as a reporter Became a sub-editor and five years from leaving farm work was made editor of the northern editions of a national Sunday newspaper After fourteen years in journalism thinking that he had saved enough to go back into the country again he gave up his job and now lives in an isolated Derbyshire village where in the mornings he writes and in the afternoons cultivates his own land He says that his aim as a writer is to tell the truth about the country Has had two books published, *Farmer's Creed* and *Teamsman* (Harrap) and has had stories in *The Listener* *London Mercury* *Cornhill* *Manchester Guardian* and a few other periodicals His one act comedy *Bachelor's Love* was broadcast

ELLIS ST JOSEPH is a young American who had a remarkable success a few years ago with his short story *A Passenger To Bali* He is now chiefly engaged on writing for the films

IRWIN SHAW was as he puts it born educated and disappointed in Brooklyn He is the author of the two very successfully produced plays *Bury the Dead* and *The*

Gentle People, and is working on another. He has written a great deal for radio and the films, as well as for a variety of magazines, ranging from the *New Republic* to *The New Yorker*. His first volume of stories was *Sailor off the Bremen*, which was published by Random House last August. Shaw is 26, and has been writing for seven years.

EISDELL TUCKER was born in 1900. A biographical note appears in *Penguin Parade* 4.

KERRY WOOD, young Scotch-Canadian freelance writer, has had over 600 stories and articles published in North American periodicals. He usually writes on Natural History subjects, but occasionally utilises the Western Canada atmosphere, as in *A Dance at Muhlberg's*.



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